BEGINNING LIFE.

Printed by Ballantyne & Company, Edinburgh.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION, ... 1

PART I.—RELIGION.

I. IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION, ... 9

II. OBJECT OF RELIGION, ... 15

III. THE SUPERNATURAL, ... 30

IV. REVELATION, ... 41

V. THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES, ... 46

VI. THE INDIRECT WITNESS, ... 51

VII. THE DIRECT WITNESS, ... 66

VIII. THE INTERNAL WITNESS, ... 97

IX. WHAT TO BELIEVE, ... 108

X. WHAT TO AIM AT, ... 130

PART II.—BUSINESS.

PAGE
I. WHAT TO DO, ... 143
II. HOW TO DO IT. 164

PART III.—STUDY.

I. HOW TO READ, ... 183
II. BOOKS—WHAT TO READ, ... 203

PART IV.—RECREATION.

I. HOW TO ENJOY, ... 243
II. WHAT TO ENJOY, ... 260

CONCLUSION, ... 283

Work away!
For the Master's eye is on us,
Never off us, still upon us,
Night and day!
Work away!
Keep the busy fingers plying;
Keep the ceaseless shuttles flying:
See that never thread lie wrong;
Let not clash or clatter round us,
Sound of whirring wheels, confound us;
Steady hand! let woof be strong
And firm, that has to last so long!
Work away!

Bring your axes, woodmen true;
Smite the forest till the blue
Of Heaven's sunny eye looks through
Every wide and tangled glade;
Jungle swamp and thicket shade
Give to day!
O'er the torrents fling your bridges,
Pioneers! Upon the ridges
Widen, smooth the rocky stair—
They that follow, far behind,
Coming after us, will find
Surer, easier, footing there;
Heart to heart, and hand with hand,
From the dawn to dusk of day,
Work away!
Scouts upon the mountain's peak—
Ye that see the Promised Land,
Hearten us! for ye can speak
Of the country ye have seann'd,
Far away!

Work away!
For the Father's eye is on us,
Never off us, still upon us,
Night and day!
Work and pray!
Pray! and Work will be completer;
Work! and Prayer will be the sweeter.
Love! and Prayer and Work the fleeter
Will ascend upon their way!

Live in Future as in Present!
Work for both while yet the day
Is our own! for Lord and Peasant,
Long and bright as summer's day,
Cometh, yet more sure, more pleasant,
Cometh soon our Holiday;
Work away!

The Author of "The Patience of Hope"

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a charm in opening manhood which has commended itself to the imagination in every age. The undefined hopes and promises of the future—the dawning strength of intellect—the vigorous flow of passion—the very exchange of home ties and protected joys for free and manly pleasures, give to this period an interest and excitement unfelt, perhaps, at any other. It is the beginning of life in the sense of independent and self-supporting action. Hitherto life has been to boys, as to girls, a derivative and dependent existence—a sucker from the parent growth—a home discipline

of authority and guidance and communicated impulse. But henceforth it is a transplanted growth of its own—a new and free power of activity, in which the mainspring is no longer authority or law from without, but principle or opinion from within. The shoot which has been nourished under the shelter of the parent stem, and bent according to its inclination, is transferred to the open world, where of its own impulse and character it must take root, and grow into strength, or sink into weakness and vice.

There is a natural pleasure in such a change. The sense of freedom is always joyful, at least at first. The mere consciousness of awakening powers and prospective work touches with elation the youthful breast.

But to every right-hearted youth this time must be also one of severe trial. Anxiety must greatly dash its pleasure. There must be regrets behind, and uncertainties before. The thought of home must excite a pang even in the first moments of freedom. Its glad shelter—its kindly guidance—its very restraints, how dear and tender must they seem in parting! How brightly must they shine in the retrospect as the youth turns from them to the hardened and unfamiliar face of the world! With what a sweet, sadly-cheering pathos must they linger in the memory! And then what chance and hazard is there in his newly-gotten freedom!

What instincts of warning in its very novelty and dim inexperience! What possibilities of failure as well as of success in the unknown future as it stretches before him!

Serious thoughts like these more frequently underlie the careless neglect of youth than is supposed. They do not shew themselves, or seldom do; but they work deeply and quietly. Even in the boy who seems all absorbed in amusements or tasks there is frequently a secret life of intensely serious consciousness which keeps questioning with itself as to the meaning of what is going on around him and what may be before him—which projects itself into the future, and rehearses the responsibilities and ambitions of his career.

Certainly there is a grave importance as well as a pleasant charm in the beginning of life. There is awe as well as excitement in it, when rightly viewed. The possibilities that lie in it of noble or ignoble work—of happy self-sacrifice or ruinous self-indulgence—the capacities in the right use of which it may rise to heights of beautiful virtue, in the abuse of which it may sink to depths of debasing vice—make the crisis one of fear as well as of hope, of sadness as well as of joy. It is wistful as well as pleasing to think of the young passing year by year into the world, and engaging with its duties, its interests, and temptations. Of the throng that struggle at the

gates of entrance, how many reach their anticipated goal? Carry the mind forward a few years, and some have climbed the hills of difficulty and gained the eminence on which they wished to stand—some, although they may not have done this, have yet kept their truth unhurt, their integrity unspoiled; but others have turned back, or have perished by the way, or fallen in weakness of will, no more to rise again.

As we place ourselves with the young at the opening gates of life, and think of the end from the beginning, it is a deep concern more than anything else that fills us. Words of earnest argument and warning counsel rather than of congratulation rise to our lips. The seriousness outweighs the pleasantness of the prospect. The following pages have sprung out of this feeling. They deal with religion, and especially with the difficulties of Christian faith at present; they venture to touch upon professional business and its responsibilities; they offer some counsels as to study and books. The interests and occupation of the writer have naturally led him to deal with the first of these topics at most length. Faith is the foundation of life; religion of duty; and it is impossible to discuss either without respect to the peculiar atmosphere of doubt in which we live, and in which many of the young live even more consciously than their elders. Yet there is nothing of elaborateness—of learning—or the

pretence of learning, in these discussions. They are designed as the free talk of a friend rather than the disquisitions of a theologian. The author has long thought over some of the topics, and he should be glad if his thoughts were useful to any who may be busy with the same inquiries. Plain and unelaborate as they are, they are not likely to interest any but those who have some spirit of inquiry. If to such they should prove at all "Aids to faith," their highest purpose would be served.

PART I.

RELIGION.

I.

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION.

THE most important subject to a young man, or to any man, is religion. What is my position in the world? Whence have I come, and whither am I going? What is the meaning of life and of death? What is above and before me? These are questions from the burden of which no one escapes. The most idle, the most selfish, the most self-confident do not evade them. Those who care least for religion, in any ordinary sense, are found inventing their own solution of them. All experience proves that men cannot shut out the thought of the Unseen and the Supreme, although they may banish from their minds the faith of their

childhood, and despise what they deem the superstition of their neighbours. The void thus created fills up with new materials of faith, often far less interesting and unspeakably less worthy than those which they superseded. Our age has been rife in examples of this; and men have wondered—if, indeed, any aberration of human intellect can well excite wonder—at the spectacle of those who have professed that they could not conceive of any notion of a Supreme Being without emotions of ridicule, exhibiting a faith in the supernatural, in comparison with which the superstitions of a past age are probable and dignified. So strangely does violated human nature take its revenges, and bring in at the door what has been unhappily expelled at the window.

The thought of the supernatural abides with man, do what he will. It visits the most callous; it interests the most sceptical. For a time—even for a long time—it may lie asleep in the breast, either amidst the sordid despairs, or the proud, rich, and young enjoyments of life; but it wakens up in curious inquiry, or dreadful anxiety. In any case, it is a thought of which no man can be reasonably independent. In so far as he retains his reasonable being, and preserves the consciousness of moral susceptibilities and relations, in so far will this thought of a higher world—of a Life enclosing and influencing his

present life—be a powerful and practical thought with him.

It becomes clearly, therefore, a subject of urgent importance to every man how he thinks of a higher world. What is it to him? What are its objects,—their relation to him, and his relation to them? Suppose the case of a young man entering upon life, with the sense of duty beginning to form in him, or at least working itself clear and firm in his mind, how directly must all his views of the near and the present be affected by his thought of the Supreme and the future? It may not be that he has any distinct consciousness of moulding his views of the one by the other. But not the less surely will the "life that now is" to him be moulded by the character of the life that he believes to be above him and before him. The lower will take its colour from the higher—the "near" from the "heavenly horizon." There will be a light or a darkness shed around his present path in proportion as his faith opens a steady or a hesitating—a comprehensive or a partial—gaze into the future and unseen.

It may seem, on a mere superficial view, that this is an overstatement. The young grow up and go into the world, and take their places there often with little feeling of another world, and how they stand in relation to it. Their characters are formed as it might seem by chance,

and the tastes and opinions of the accidental society into which they are thrown. And no doubt such influences are very potent. They are the enveloping atmosphere of character, silently feeding and rounding the outlines of its growth. But withal, its true springs are deeper —"Out of the heart are the issues of life." The soul within is the germ of the unfolding man, no less than the seed is that of the plant, fashioned and fed as it may be by the outer air. And the *essential form* of character will be found in every case to depend upon the nature of the inner life from which it springs. Whether this be dull and torpid, or quick and powerful, will very soon shew itself in the outward fashion of the man.

The mere surface of many lives may look equally fair, but there will be found to be a great difference, according as some hold to a higher life, and draw their most central and enduring qualities thence; and as others are found to have no higher attachment—no living spring of Divine righteousness and strength. What is deepest in every man, and most influential, however little at times it may seem so, is, after all, his relation to God and the Unseen. The genuine root of character is here, as trial soon proves. How a man believes concerning God and the higher world—*how his soul is*—will shew itself in his whole life. From this inner source, its

essential and determining qualities will run. On this foundation its structure rests.

The religious belief of young men, therefore, is a subject of the most vital moment for themselves, and for all. Whatever tends to affect it is pregnant with incalculable consequences. To weaken or lose it, is to impair the very life of society. To deepen and expand it is to add strength to character and durability to virtue. The present must be held to be a time of trial, so far as the faith of the young and the faith of all are concerned. Questions touching the worth and the authority of Christianity are widely mooted and openly canvassed. There may be something to alarm—there is certainly much to excite serious thought in this prevailing bias of religious discussion. Of one thing we may be sure, that it is neither possible to avert this course of discussion, nor desirable to do so. It must have free course. The thought of many hearts must be spoken out—otherwise it will eat within, and the last state will be worse than the first. It may be perilous to have the faith of our youth tried as by fire; but it would be still more perilous to discountenance or stifle free inquiry. Christianity has nothing to fear from the freest discussion. Its own motto is, "Prove all things—hold fast that which is good."

It seems a very hopeless thing, now-a-days,

to try to hold any minds by the mere bonds of authority. The intellectual air all around is too astir for this. There is no system of mental seclusion can well shut out the young from opinions the most opposite to those to which they have been accustomed. The old safeguards, which were wont to enclose the religious life as with a sacred charm, no longer do so. Even those who rest within the shade of authority, do so, in many cases, from choice rather than from habit. They know not what else to do. They have gone in quest of truth, and have not found it; and so they have been glad to throw themselves into arms which profess an infallible shelter, and seek repose there. This is not remedy for doubt, but despair of reason. And no good can come in this way.

The young can only be led in the way of truth, not by stifling, but by enlightening and strengthening all reasonable impulses within them. Religion must approve itself to them as thoroughly reasonable—in a right sense—as well as authoritative. It must be the highest truth in the light of judgment, and history, and conscience.

II.

OBJECT OF RELIGION.

THE fundamental point in religious inquiry must be the character of the Supreme Existence. That there is a Supreme Existence or Power operating in the world can scarcely be said to be denied by any. The Pantheist does not deny the reality of such a Power. The Positivist does not dispute it. Both fall back upon something higher, something general, in which lower and particular existences take their rise. The Atheist or the absolute sceptic of existence superior to his own is not to be found, or, at least, need not be argued with; for it is not possible to find any common ground of argument with him. and all contro-

versy must suppose some common ground from which to start. The pure atheistic position is so utterly irrational as to be beyond the pale of discussion. Everywhere in the range of modern speculation and modern science, it is conceded, or, rather, it may be said to be implied as a rational datum, without which neither philosophy nor science would be intelligible, that there is a universal principle pervading existence, and in some sense controlling it.

What principle? and in what sense superior and controlling? It is here that all the controversy lies, and has long lain; and in our time especially, the inquirer is met here at once with seductive theories, which, while they serve to exercise his rational instinct, and seem to fall in with the advancing results of scientific investigation, are in their very nature destitute of all religious and moral value.

The Pantheist tells him that the universal principle is nothing else than the spirit of nature, or the collective life, animating all its parts, and ever taking new shapes of order and beauty in its endless mutations. The Positivist speaks to him of the laws of nature, or the great scheme in which these laws unite, regulating and governing all things. By both the universal principle is held to be a principle *within nature*. Whether it be regarded as a Pantheistic spirit-life, or a material law or force—the conclusion

is the same, that it is only nature itself in some modification or another which is the ultimate spring of existence, and the great arranger of it. There is no room left in either view for an Existence transcending nature, and acting independently of it.

It may seem that this is a very old delusion; and so it is. There is no creed of human origin older than that which deifies nature. There is no speculation more ancient than Pantheism. Yet there is none also younger—none more powerful over many minds at the present day.

Is nature a self-subsistent, ever-unfolding process, containing all its energies within itself? and are life and intelligence mere developments from its fertile bosom? Or is mind the primary directing power of which nature is but the expression and symbol? Is there a life higher than any mere nature-life—a rational and moral Will, transcending and guiding all the processes of nature,—in nothing governed by, in everything governing them? This is the issue, more pertinently and urgently than ever, in the present crisis of speculative and religious inquiry.

How deeply this question goes into the whole subject of religion and morality must be obvious to any reflection. If once the doubt insinuates itself, and begins to hold the mind as to whether

there is a higher Will than our own instructing and guiding us, to which we are responsible, and whose law should be our rule, it is plain that the very spring of divine obedience must be slackened, if not destroyed. Men cannot habitually hold themselves free from a sense of duty and yet be dutiful—cannot deliberately cherish views at variance with all feeling of reverence for a higher Power and yet be pious. When the mind comes to dwell familiarly on the idea of nature rather than of God, on that of development rather than of responsibility, on that of harmony rather than of authority, there gradually follows a marked change in the point of view from which life, and all its relations and interests, are regarded. There springs up an insensible and subtle selfishness, all the more powerful that it proceeds not from the grosser impulses, but from a diffused reflective feeling that nothing as it were can be helped, that "the great soul of the world is just;" and that every man accordingly is to take the good provided for him, and make the most of it for his own happiness, unmindful of the happiness or the misery of others.

There is plenty of this selfishness, no doubt, in the world under every variety of opinion, plenty of it, alas! in the very heart of the Christian Church; but a system of thought which contemplates the world as its own end, and life, at

the very best, as a mere process of culture, which, by rejecting a higher Will, deliberately rejects a moral ideal, tends directly to encourage and educate such a comprehensive spirit of self-indulgence as the only guide of conduct. "Our appetites, being as much a portion of ourselves as any other quality we possess, ought to be indulged, otherwise the whole individual is not developed." This becomes the obvious canon of a philosophy which looks no higher than nature. It consecrates passion, and hallows the pleasures of the world as sources of experience and culture.

Such views may easily prove seductive to young minds. There is a novelty and apparent grandeur and comprehensiveness about them that steal the imagination as well as minister to the senses. Especially is this apt to prove the case where the fair claims of nature may have been made to yield to the arbitrary exercise of religious authority. When the bow has been bent too far in one direction, it will recoil in the other. Religion is sometimes enforced to the neglect and even the defiance of nature. Nature takes its revenge when it wakens up, and finds itself strong in the consciousness of neglected rights. Authority sometimes holds the reins upon conscience too tightly and pretentiously. And conscience takes its play when it is able to look its master in the face and finds how ill sup-

affairs arises from the same immutable necessity as it does in nature. In the latter, the whole process is physically conditioned. The links in the chain of succession may be all exposed. But in the evolution of mental phenomena this is admitted to be impossible.* The inductive logician allows as much as this. The Theist goes further, and maintains that, in the last resort, there is an internal power or self which cannot be brought within the law of natural sequence—nay, which, in its essence, defies this law, and places itself over against it.

According to this view, man is under law; but he is also more than any mere natural law. The laws which regulate phenomena apply to his conduct, but they do not exhaust his being. He has a spirit and life of his own which transcend nature-conditions, and are not contained by them. Above the system of these conditions there is a higher system of being, and man, in his innermost life, belongs to this higher system. It is his peculiar glory that he does so—that, amid ceaseless movements of matter, before which he is apparently so weak, he is conscious of an existence higher than all matter, and which would survive its wildest crash. He *knows himself*, and that is what nature does not do. There is no play of conscious life in its mighty mutations. But man is characteristically a con-

* Mill's Logic, ii. 422.

scious being. According to the frequently-quoted saying of Pascal—"Man is but a reed, the feeblest thing in nature; but he is a reed that thinks, (*un roseau pensant.*) It needs not that the universe arm itself to crush him. An exhalation, a drop of water, suffices to destroy him. But were the universe to crush him, man is yet nobler than the universe, *for he knows that he dies;* and the universe, even in prevailing against him, knows not its power."

"Man is yet nobler than the universe." He is characteristically a self-conscious, thinking soul, higher than all nature, and which no subtle development of mere natural conditions can ever explain. This is the eternal basis of Christian Theism, and of all religion that is not a mere consecration of earthly energies and passions. This is the only spring of a genuine morality that can survey man as under some higher law of voluntary obedience, and not a mere law of harmony and growth.

And if our appeal to internal experience is not accepted, let us carry our appeal into the open world of history. If consciousness may cheat us, surely the voice of collective humanity cannot deceive us. The Positivist at least cannot refuse an appeal to the course of civilisation.

Now, of two theories of human progress, the one of which regards history as a mere develop-

ment of natural laws, and the other of which, while admitting the operation of such laws, yet recognises everywhere a higher Divine agency expressed in them—we affirm, confidently, that the latter theory is not only more consistent with the dignity of humanity, but is the only one capable of explaining its development. Once recognise the spiritual character of man, the power of free will and moral action in him, allying him to a higher system of things; and history becomes a grand and intelligible drama with a clear meaning. Notwithstanding all its retrogressions and perplexities, the higher is still seen overcoming the lower, and the tide of improvement swelling forward, not merely under natural changes, but an advancing force of moral intelligence.

That this force is the special spring of human progress is everywhere apparent. At every great turn of man's course, it has been a new moral life—some breathing of a higher spirit—and not any mere combinations of material, nor even of intellectual agencies, which has saved civilisation from what seemed impending dissolution, and driven its wheels forward with a fresh impetus. Taking man in any point of view, it is the reality of this higher life, however caricatured and debased, that more than anything else strikes us. All speculation implies it—all religion witnesses to it. It is the light shining amid all the natural grossness of his career, and guiding

it onward amid all its entanglements. All the noblest deeds of heroism spring from it. All the highest expressions of thought radiate it. To the Positivist these are puzzles to be accounted for on his theory. To the Theist they are only the glancing expressions of his own faith in a Divine origin of humanity—the brightening evidence of a higher spirit in it claiming affinity with a higher system of things—a Divine order below which man has fallen, but towards which he still tends.

Can any one, after all, seriously believe that human history is a mere play of natural forces, and man the half-conscious player—the creature not of a higher intelligent guidance, but rather of dumb nature-conditions and the brain-power which they generate? When the conclusion is thus nakedly put, it contains within itself its own refutation. It would indeed be a contradiction of all progress, and a lie to all civilisation, to affirm that this was the climax of both—the discovery in which they were destined to culminate. No; all consciousness and all history prove—if it is possible to prove anything—that man is a spiritual being, with convictions, and hopes, and aspirations above the world, which no natural good merely can satisfy, and which are in truth the motion of the Divinity within him. He is nature, and yet spirit. "He is man, and yet more than man," as Pascal has it. There is a divine element of conscious reason in him which asserts its superiority over the whole sphere of nature.

While in one point of view we feel called upon to say with the same great thinker, "What is man in the scale of infinitude?—he is nothing in comparison;" yet, in another point of view, "He is everything in comparison." His very greatness is deducible from his weakness. A mere point in creation, he is yet its interpreter, and in a true sense its master. "He is the prophet of the otherwise dumb oracle—the voice of the otherwise silent symbol." First humbly learning he can then rule its secrets, and apply them to his purposes and pleasure. He is thus the centre, if not the "measure of things"—the conscious life within the vast circumference and variety of unconscious being, who gives all its highest beauty and meaning to the latter. "In nature there is nothing great but man; in man there is nothing great but mind."

Such a view as this at once carries us beyond nature. It is of the very essence of a free and intelligent will that it is allied to a higher order. It comes from above. It has its true being in a region of freedom below which nature lies.

It is of great importance to apprehend this, because there has been a recent way of speaking which strongly insists upon the manifestation of reason in nature, and yet refuses to allow the former an independent existence. The cosmical order is nothing but a display of Divine wisdom

and power, yet we must not conceive of this wisdom and power as possibly expressing themselves in any other order. Nature not only manifests them, but embeds and fixes them. Take away the sign, and there is nothing behind.

Now, it is clearly of no consequence whether we say "law" or "mind" if, in the last recourse, we mean by the latter nothing more than by the former. If we do not recognise something behind the cosmical order higher than itself, and whose subsistence is not merely in the order, then we need not trouble ourselves to go beyond the latter. If the mind that speaks to me in nature be absolutely invariable—if there be no living power beneath its "recondite dependencies" which is capable of setting them aside, if it will—if the mind, in short, which it is admitted nature essentially manifests, be not a person—nothing but "order"—then I need trouble myself but little with its investigation and study. A balder Theism than this it is scarcely possible to conceive. The position of the Positivist is more consistent and intelligible. He generalises facts, and gathers them into unities of law, and says he knows nothing more. There is nothing more, he pretends, than natural facts, and the law or order in which they shew themselves. Even he, indeed, is not quite consistent in saying so much, for the very idea of law only exists to him because there is something more than outward facts.

There is a rational and spiritual element already asserted in the very apprehension of law. But at least, he is somewhat more consistent than the professed Theist who speaks of mind in nature, and means merely, like the ancient poet, a *mens infusa per artus*—an immanent necessity of reason incapable of action apart from nature—inseparably bound up in its evolutions.*

For on what ground do we discern "mind" or "law" in nature at all? Abstract the "we," the discerning agent, the light is gone—the vision disappears; admit the "we," the vision is there. The mind is not in the facts. But the mind in us reads a mind in nature:

"In our life alone does nature live."

Not that we make nature living and intelligent, but that the face of nature answers intelligently to our intelligence. There is everywhere the smile of recognition on its great outlines; mind responds to mind as in a glass. But what sort of mind? Mind merely immanent in nature, and forming a part of it? Not in the least. We do not identify the mirror and its revelation. The Mind which we contemplate is free and moral like our own, inhabiting nature, yet also dwelling in the high and lofty sphere beyond; acting by law, yet rejoicing in the plenitude of its own freedom—a

* Or even the modern poet—

"A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

living Personality, communicating with us in the medium of His own creation.

To adopt and extend an illustration furnished to our hand by the writer whom we are combating,*—"If we read a book which it requires thought and exercise of reason to understand, but which we find discloses more and more truth and reason as we proceed in the study, we properly say that thought and reason *exist in that book*. Such a book confessedly exists, and is ever open to us in the natural world." True, but not all the truth. The supposed book is in itself a mere arrangement of dead characters. The thought and reason are not *in it*, except by a well-understood convention of language. They really exist only in the mind of the author; and the really living facts before us are the *mind of the author and the mind of the reader* meeting in the pages of the book.

Such a book is nature, revealing to all who can read an intelligent Author. When we study it, the conclusion to which we come is, not that it is itself mind, or merely that mind exists in it, but that it reveals mind. It is the record of the thoughts of another mind which has freely chosen this mode of communication with us. We rejoice in the communication, but we conceive of the Mind as still higher than its communication. We are thankful for the volume; but we think of the Author as yet greater than His volume.

* Baden Powell.

III.

THE SUPERNATURAL.

REASON and history, then, carry us beyond nature. We may refuse to listen to both, and wrap ourselves in the conceit of "general laws," as all that we can know. But all our better instincts rebel against this pseudo-intellectualism; and in our moments of highest knowledge, as well as of lowliest reverence, we delight to contemplate in nature an Author, and not merely a Presence—an intelligent Will, and not merely a comprehensive Order.

But if this be so, there is at least an opening left for the supernatural. If there be an intelligent Author of the world—a moral Power su-

perior to it—it is conceivable that this Being may manifest Himself in other ways than those which we call natural.

Farther than this we need not go at present. We say nothing of the probability or likelihood of a supernatural revelation. Paley has put this supposition with his usual shrewd ingenuity; but other considerations besides that of the mere existence of a higher Power are required to give effect to it. The question before us at present is simply as to the possibility of a supernatural revelation. And our position is—Let a supreme Author of nature be once recognised—in other words, let a theistic basis of speculation be once accepted—and the question as to the possibility of revelation is thereby settled in the affirmative.

It is of some importance to see this clearly. The comprehensive spirit of modern speculation has, at least, been useful in clearing away many entanglements of thought and argument in which the opponents and defenders alike of the Christian faith were wont to lose themselves. Men see the bearing of principles better than they did. The speculative arena may be covered with as many combatants as ever; but the speculative atmosphere has cleared somewhat, and enabled the combatants to see more plainly where they stand.

Supposing, then, we stand on a theistic basis —that, on grounds of reason, and history, and faith we have accepted such a basis, we are no longer in a position to dispute the very idea of miracle. We may argue as to the meaning of it, and the fact or occurrence in any particular case; but we cannot repudiate the possibility of it. For where there is a supreme Will above nature, and ruling it, beyond all question this Will may subordinate nature to its special purposes—may, in other words, if it please, interfere in its ordinary operations.* Shut out this possibility, and you destroy the speculative basis on which you profess to rest. Deny that nature can be interfered with, and you leave nothing higher than nature. You make it supreme and self-contained. You shift your fundamental ground.

Supposing on the other hand—as Hume virtually did—you take your stand on a mere nature-basis—fix yourself on the phenomenal, incredulous of all existence beyond — then, quite legitimately, you would argue with him and others, that there can be no such thing as a miracle. If nature "round our life," and there be nothing else, or, at least, nothing higher than its sequences, then the question of testimony is

* This is the very principle laid down by Newton. The laws of nature are inviolable, except *when it is good to the Divine will to act otherwise—nisi ubi aliter agere bonum est.*

out of account altogether. *There can be no miracle.* The matter is foregone and concluded on a speculative basis, which shuts out the idea of miracle altogether, and leaves no room for discussion regarding it.

That this was virtually Hume's position is apparent to all who examine it. A "uniform experience against every miraculous event" is nothing else than the assertion of a nature-basis. Law or sequence is in such a view invariable. There is nothing else. It is of little consequence to argue about the relative value of testimony and experience, where experience is erected into a uniformity which cannot be overturned. This position has been avowedly laid down by modern unbelief. The grand principle of law is pervading and universal. It is impossible to conceive any conflict with it. And miracle being in its very conception at variance with it, must be rejected. This has been declared by a whole host of writers in our day. The young can scarcely take up a Review in which the position is not asserted or combated.

It was very natural, perhaps, that this conflict should arise between law and miracle. There is something so captivating in the idea of a great cosmical order, that it is apt to carry away the scientific mind, and shut out all other ideas from it. The idea is not only captivating, but illuminating. It gives light to the reason and

peace to the conscience, when rightly apprehended. The theologian assuredly need not try to fight with it—he will only blunt his weapons and injure his cause—he must adopt and expand it, as was long ago hinted by one of the greatest of theological thinkers.

This, Christian thought has not failed to do in our day. As the idea of law has ascended to its present dominance over the higher intelligence, it has been able to shew that the idea, rightly conceived, is not at all at variance with the Christian miracles.

Supposing it be admitted that law is universal, that the world is founded on it, and is otherwise unintelligible to the reason. What then? This fundamental law or order is not necessarily identical with any existing series of natural phenomena. These express it, but they do not measure it. You can only maintain that they do so by placing nature above mind—by denying the idea of a Supreme Will guiding and controlling the world—by denying, in short, the Theistic basis on which we profess to argue. It is not only not inconsistent with this basis to conceive of the Supreme Mind under the idea of law, but, in point of fact, this idea is essentially involved in every enlightened doctrine of Theism. God is eminently a God of order. Every manifestation of the Supreme Will must assume to our minds the form of order. Arbitrariness, or caprice, or even in-

terference, in the petty use of that term, is entirely at variance with every enlightened conception of Deity.

So far, therefore, there is no quarrel between the upholders of law and the advocates of a Theistic interpretation of nature. Only the last word of the one may be *law;* while the last word of the other is "God." But further, if the action of the Supreme Reason is not to be measured by any existing order of natural phenomena, then we open room at once for a higher order of phenomena taking the place of the present, *should this seem right and wise to the Supreme Reason.* The question is not one of "interference," but of higher and lower action. The Divine order may take a new start, and issue in new forms for the accomplishment of its own beneficent ends. The Scripture miracle is the expression of the Divine order in such new shapes —"the law of a greater freedom," as one has said,* "swallowing up the law of a lesser."

But this, it may be said—and has been by some said, not without the vehemence characteristic of old opinions—is something very different from the old idea of a miracle, which was understood to involve a "temporary suspension of the known laws of nature"—"a deviation from the established constitution and fixed order of the universe."

* Dean Trench.

Such definitions, be it observed, on one side or another, are in no degree scriptural. The scriptural facts simply announce themselves; they nowhere tell us what we are to think of them. We may think of them in the one or the other of these ways, and yet be equally just to their Christian significance and value.

Is there really, after all, much difference between the views when we analyse and look closely at the terms in which they are conveyed? A "miracle," some will have us say, is a "suspension," a "violation of known laws of nature." This is language carelessly flung in the face of scientific induction; but what, after all, must it mean to any enlightened Theist? The "known laws of nature" of which it speaks, are and can be nothing more than some section or series of natural phenomena, and the supposed miracle nothing more than the temporary arrest or reversal of these phenomena. Certain conditions of disease ordinarily cause death; the progress of the disease is stopped, and the patient healed. The inevitable sequences of dissolution are arrested, and the dead man is restored to life again. These are sufficiently impressive illustrations of "suspension" or "violation" of natural laws. But are they not also very good illustrations of lower laws giving place to higher—the laws of disease to the laws of health—the laws of death to those of life? We may use what terms we

like, but the fact is we know nothing of the mode of miraculous operation, and rather reveal our ignorance than anything else, by our definitions in this as in many other matters. All that we really apprehend is a change of natural conditions under some supernatural impulse. What appears "reversal" or "violation" to us, may seem anything but this to a more comprehensive vision than ours.

The stoutest advocate of *interference* can mean nothing more than that the Supreme Will has so moved the hidden springs of nature, that a new issue arises on given circumstances. The ordinary issue is supplanted by a higher issue. This seems an appropriate way of expressing the character of the change wrought. But in any case, the essential facts before us are a certain set of phenomena, and a higher Will moving them. How moving them? is a question for human definition, but the answer to which does not, and cannot, affect the Divine meaning of the change. Yet when we reflect that this higher Will is everywhere reason or wisdom, it seems a juster, as well as a more comprehensive view, to regard it as operating by subordination and evolution rather than by "interference" or "violation." We know but a little way. It is not for us to measure our knowledge against God's plans, but rather to take these plans as the interpreters and guides of our knowledge. And seeing how

far His "miraculous interpositions" have entered into human history, and constituted its most powerful elements in the education of the human race, it seems certainly the humble as well as the wise inference which is suggested in Butler's guarded words, that these interpositions may have been all along in like manner (as God's common providential interpositions) "by general laws of wisdom."

According to this view the idea of law is so far from being contravened by the Christian miracles, that it is taken up by them and made their very basis. They are the expression of a higher Law working out its wise ends among the lower and ordinary sequences of life and history. These ordinary sequences represent nature —nature, however, not as an immutable fate, but a plastic medium through which a higher Voice and Will are ever addressing us, and which therefore may be wrought into new issues when the voice has a new message, and the will a special purpose for us.

The advantage of such a view is not only that it fits better into the conclusions of modern thought, but that it really purifies the idea of miracle, and sets it before us in its only true light and importance. It is not a mere prodigy or wonder which we cannot explain, but it is everywhere a "revelation" or sign—the manifestation of a beneficent or wise purpose, and not a mere arbi-

trary exercise of power. It is the indication of a higher kingdom of life and righteousness subordinating the lower for its good, bringing it into obedience to its own improvement and blessing. There is a higher kingdom and a lower kingdom—a kingdom of nature and physical sequences, and a kingdom of spirit and free agency. "And this free agency, straight out of the ultimate springs of the Spirit, seems to give," it has been said, "the true conception of the supernatural. Nature is the sphere and system of God's self-prescribed method of reliable evolution of phenomena; but above and beyond nature He is spirit, including nature, indeed, as part of its expression, but, instead of being all committed to nature, transcending it on every side, and opening a life of communion with the spirits that can reflect Himself. All is thus His agency; nature His fixed will—spirit His free will." And the miracle emerges when the latter is seen to traverse the former, when the higher kingdom is seen to witness itself among the ordinarily unchanging phenomena of the lower.

Miracle is, therefore, truly a revelation of character as well as an exhibition of power. It is the Divine Will coming forth to the immediate gaze of man, pushing back, as it were, the intervolved folds of the physical, so that we may see there is a moral spring behind it,

and making known some high purpose in doing so. The idea of interference for the mere sake of interference, or even of the mere assertion of might to subdue or overawe the mind, is not that suggested. Rather it is the idea of a higher plan and truth unfolding themselves, of a Will which, while leaving nature, as a whole, to its established course, must yet witness to itself as above nature, and shew its glory in the instruction and redemption of creatures that are more than nature, although having their present being amidst its activities.*

* "The one grand and essential distinction between the miracles of Scripture and the operations of so-called laws is the personal and sensible interposition of the Supreme Creator evidencing to man His supremacy over nature, and His providential care of man by such manifestations of direct power as none but the Supreme Creator could possess. This is what Christianity must maintain; all other questions may be set aside. Nature is that course of operations in the world before us in which the Divine Will is working continually and perpetually, but to us secretly, and, as science will assert, uniformly, immutably. Besides that there is another course very deeply entwined with it, in which the hand and the presence of God are made known to us by a distinct series of rare and extraordinary operations. Yet they both make up one whole, are both as much parts of one consistent and harmonious system as the grand ellipses of the moon, and its occasional mutations and deflections, are features of one predetermined orbit."—*Quarterly Review, October* 1861.

IV.

REVELATION.

WHEN we turn to contemplate the historical revelation of the supernatural in Scripture we find that it answers to the idea already suggested. It is not a series of isolated wonders, but a coherent manifestation of Divine purpose, culminating in a Divine Personality, who came to bear witness of a higher kingdom and truth.

What is the scriptural representation? Beginning with the fall of God's free and intelligent creation from an estate of holiness and happiness to an estate of sin and misery, it unfolds, at first in faint and vague outline, but with

an increasing particularity and brightness as time passes on, a remedial or redeeming purpose towards the fallen. The evolution of this purpose, in adaptation to the varying necessities of human nature, is the great function of Scripture. Passing through the forms of what have been called the patriarchal, the Mosaic, the prophetical dispensations, the purpose brightens on us as we descend the course of sacred tradition. Whatever is specially miraculous in Scripture gathers round it, and receives its highest meaning from it. To detach such events, and look at them as mere isolated manifestations of supernatural power, at once destroys their moral significance, and increases their historical difficulty. But let them be regarded as parts of a great whole—as successive manifestations of an increasing purpose running through the ages—as special utterances of the great thought and love of God for His creatures, of which no history is without trace, but of which the Jewish history is a continuous and exceptional witness; and then, while we never lose hold of the moral aim, we will find that the very perception of this aim helps to solve difficulties, and to impart a consistency and intelligibility to many details.

The general form of the supernatural in the Old Testament Scriptures is that of direct communication between God and man. Adam hears the voice of God speaking to him in the garden.

"The Lord God" is represented as calling unto Adam and his wife, and enunciating articulately the first promise of a Deliverer or Redeemer. In the same manner God speaks unto Abraham, to go forth from his native land, and promises to make of him a great nation. Jacob sees God face to face, and speaks with Him. The Angel of God speaks to him in a dream, saying, "I am the God of Bethel." The same Divine Personality, "the Angel of the Lord," appears to Moses "in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush," and calls to him out of the bush, saying, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

It is needless to multiply examples. This form of the supernatural runs throughout the whole of the Old Testament, and is, as it were, the great framework on which it is constructed. It is a revelation of God to man, in which God personally deals with man, instructing, directing, correcting, blessing him. One great thought, from first to last, animates the revelation—the thought of deliverance—of a salvation not come, but coming. Evil was not to triumph, although it had gained a temporary victory. The seed of the woman would yet "bruise the head of the serpent." In Abraham all the families of the earth were to be blessed. By Moses a great deliverance was to be effected.

"I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people." Joshua was a "saviour." Samuel was the prophet of good which was nowhere realised. David constantly pointed to a salvation higher than earth—to a rest which was not that of Canaan, otherwise "he would not have spoken of another day." And in the later prophetic time, this idea of a future good, of a spiritual kingdom, rises into clear prominence. It is the dawning light which colours with its upward streaks the darkest horizon of prophecy.

This promise of a higher Messianic kingdom and glory, more than anything else, binds together the supernatural texture of the Old Testament. Its fulfilment in Jesus Christ is the life and substance of the New Testament. He is the long-promised Messiah—"He that should come to redeem Israel." He is the realisation of the continued thought of God for His creatures, that "they should not perish in their sins, but have everlasting life." He is the embodiment and completion of the Divine purpose, which Abraham saw afar off and was glad, of which David sung and Isaiah prophesied. All the threads of the supernatural, accordingly, are gathered up in Him, in whom are seen the "treasures of the Godhead bodily." God is no longer found merely speaking to men from heaven, or in dreams, or appearing to them in momentary

forms; but He has become a man, living with men, teaching them, healing them, saving them. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The Supernatural is thus a living presence, running through the ages—an unfolding power, witnessing to itself as type, and oracle, and prophecy, till it culminated in Christ, who gathers to Himself all its meaning, who is its sum and explanation. The idea of a higher order crossing a lower and fallen order that it might restore and purify it, is exactly the idea which it suggests. And when we have seized this idea, we see nothing incongruous in the special miracles of Scripture. They fall, we might say, naturally into their place. Especially the Christian miracles cluster around the person of Christ as its appropriate manifestation. They are only the expressions of the higher will which abode in Him, and which sought its native and direct action in the works of healing and life-giving blessing which it wrought.

V

THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

WHAT are called the "Evidences of Christianity" form a varied and complex argument, many parts of which can only be adequately appreciated by the fully-informed and critical student of history. The last age, perhaps, placed too much dependence on certain branches of these evidences. The present age, probably, places too little dependence on the same branches. Such oscillations of opinion are not matters either of congratulation or abuse, as they are sometimes made. They are facts in the history of opinion to be carefully studied and made such good use of as we can.

It will scarcely be denied by any one who really knows the subject, that the school of Sherlock, and Watson, and Paley, made too much of what was called the "external evidence" of Christianity. They looked at its Divine character somewhat too exclusively in the light of a judicial problem to be settled by cross-examination. They treated of various points quite confidently, which modern criticism has shewn cannot stand the test of scrutiny. They thought they could argue out their thesis irrespectively of the relation of Christianity to the spiritual consciousness of mankind, and even exhibit its Divine origin in defiance of the witness of this consciousness regarding it.* In our day, on the contrary, this self-witness, or "internal evidence" of Christianity, is like to supplant the consideration of the external evidence altogether. Christianity is not only examined and tested by the inner witness, but often judged by it and placed out of court on the most arbitrary pretences. The last was an objective age, at whose cool assumptions we have learned to smile; the present is a subjective and critical age, at whose rash denials the next will no less probably smile.

Christianity, as being equally a fact of history

* Dr Chalmers (in many of his habits of mind a strong disciple of the Paleyan school) went this length in his early Essay on Christianity. Afterwards, however, he laid special stress upon the internal evidence.

and a truth addressed to the conscience, must be able to substantiate itself alike on historical and on moral grounds. It must be able to stand the most critical inquest into its supposed origin; and it must be able, as St Paul never doubted it was, "by manifestation of the truth to commend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." They are no friends of it who shrink from the most fearless inquiry and discussion in every direction.

I. As an historical phenomenon Christianity has to be accounted for, if not on the supernatural hypothesis, on some other hypothesis. What has modern critical inquiry to say regarding it? Is it able to furnish any natural explanation of it? It has settled, or nearly so, the genesis of all other religions. It can trace and discriminate the various sources of Mohammedanism—take the student into the historical laboratory where it was compounded, and shew him, or nearly so, the secrets of its composition. Can it do anything of this sort with Christianity? Can it tell from what schools the various elements of its marvellous doctrine came?—from what sources its life germinated? The character of Mohammed, truly great and wonderful as it is, is a perfectly natural character, formed under influences and moulded by conditions which we can observe and understand. The character of Christ—can

we explain it in any natural manner? Can we unfold its development, and shew how it grew up?

It is perfectly fair to ask such questions, and to insist upon an answer to them. If we cannot get a satisfactory answer, we have, at least, cleared the way for the explanation which Christianity offers of itself.

II. What is this explanation? What are the claims of the gospel? It professes to be a supernatural revelation — a direct and special communication from God in the person and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, and in the inspired teaching of His apostles. In attestation of these claims it presents a series of miraculous facts attending its announcement—especially the great miraculous fact of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Are these facts? This might seem a simple question; yet, in reality, it is a very difficult and complicated one, as will afterwards appear, when we examine the steps which its discussion involves.

III. But Christianity must not only vindicate its Divine origin in history. It must, moreover, shew its Divine power in the soul and life of man. It must vindicate itself as the highest truth—as the only comprehensive philosophy.

It is of its very essence thus to prove its Divine origin by its Divine grandeur and efficacy.

The Christian evidences, therefore, may be reckoned and named as follows :—

I. THE INDIRECT WITNESS.
II. THE DIRECT WITNESS—MIRACLES.*
III. THE INTERNAL WITNESS.

Each of these lines of argument will claim from us a brief chapter. No one will suppose that we make any pretensions to treat them exhaustively, or, in any sense, completely. This is quite beyond our present scope—quite beside our present purpose. We wish merely to set up a few guide-posts for the inquiring. The thoughts of young men must be often turned in this direction, and we should like to point them where they may find some clear and satisfactory issue to their thoughts.

* The argument from prophecy opens up a far too extended field of discussion, nor is it at all necessary for our purpose.

VI.

THE INDIRECT WITNESS.

THE question of the origin of Christianity is one of grand interest in a purely historical point of view. What do we make of it? If we refuse to accept its supernatural origin, of what explanation does it admit?

Modern rationalistic inquiry has done something to simplify this question. The picture given in the Gospels is now acknowledged on all hands to represent, if not a reality, yet a true growth of ideas. All notion of vulgar imposture has long since vanished. Whether or not the Christ of the Gospels lived and died as there described, the conception was not invented by

priests to deceive men. It is a genuine product of history. This is the very lowest ground from which we are required to set out. The Christ of the Gospels is a phenomenon to be explained, and not a fiction to be sneered at. The infidelity which sneered, rather than argued, is no more, or, at least, needs no attention here. Down from the dawn of our era there shines a light which has enlightened the world. The radiance which streams from it has touched with its glory every eminence of human thought, and every heroism of cultivated affection. We cannot get quit of the questions, Whence and what is it?

Naturalism is not without its answer to these questions. Let us hear what it has to say. According to it, Christianity must be regarded in the main as a mere development of Judaism. The Gospel of St Matthew is its primitive expression, and the Sermon on the Mount its proper type. Jesus of Nazareth was merely a Jew of distinguished wisdom, who had the penetration to discern the moral truth that lay concealed in the official and popular faith of the Jews, and who had the courage to unveil and proclaim this truth. All of the miraculous which surrounds Him was merely the idealising dream of his followers after His death—the apotheosis which their fond faith and devotional enthusiasm accorded to Him. The Christianity of the

Church since its organisation is to be attributed to St Paul, rather than to Christ. It was not fully developed till the middle of the second century, when the Gospel of St John came forth (so they say) to crown the religious structure, which had been long rearing amid the contentions of opposing teachers.

Such is something like the famous Tübingen theory of the origin of Christianity, which Strauss first enunciated, and which Baur, with the most wonderful misapplication of genius, has sought in various forms to elaborate and expound. It has appeared with slight modifications in our own country. It may be found asserted or implied in Reviews that circulate in our families, and are much in the hands of young men. Whatever be the modifications with which it is argued, the meaning is very much the same. Christianity is but a development of Judaism, appearing in its first form in the Sermon on the Mount, and worked up into something of a theological system by the learning of St Paul, and the theosophic imagination of the writer of the fourth Gospel. Traditionary Judaism, rabbinical culture, and Alexandrian platonism, or pseudo-platonism, were the ingredients which went to make the composite gospel that was destined to subdue the world.

The sources indicated are at least the only possible sources out of which Christianity could

have sprung. And the advantage of this daring speculation is, that it fixes us down to certain facts. It tries to take us up to the opening life of Christianity; and, refusing to own the Divine fountain whence it flows, points to certain rills trickling from older fountains of thought, which may have grown into it. Let us see whether they could.

Setting out with the Gospel of St Matthew as the expression of primitive Christian doctrine, does it warrant the interpretation put upon it? Granted, for the sake of argument, that this Gospel is the first rudimentary form of Christianity, does it seem to come naturally out of Judaism? Could any mere process of purifying distillation have brought the Sermon on the Mount out of the traditional ethics of the Jews? This sermon is at least in the face of Pharisees and Sadducees alike; it could not have been learned in any of their schools. It does not read as if it had been learned in any school; but as the voice of One speaking with authority. A new spirit breathes in it—a new light and power emanate from it. It has none of the tentative air of a mere enlightened teacher of morals; it does not flash with mere gleams of genius; it shews no mistakes and no confusions; but from first to last it is a high and solemn announcement; clear, calm, penetrating, and compact

throughout. It is the speech of One who felt Himself abiding in a central light of truth, from which all human duty, in its multiplied relations, seems plain and consistent. There is a confidence of tone therefore, and a strength of language here and there, which may excite cavil, but which challenge the keenest inquiry. A peculiarly divine Spirit seems to compass it all, and bind it into a perfect expression of truth.

But, farther, it is not merely the Sermon on the Mount, and such morality as it unfolds, that we find in St Matthew's Gospel. Do we not as well find there, although not in so striking a shape as in the Gospel of St John, all the characteristic elements of evangelical doctrine? Like all the other Gospels, it attributes to Christ the forgiveness of sins, and puts in His mouth language,* which, from a mere Jewish point of view, could be considered nothing else than blasphemy; nay, which was so esteemed by the Jews when He appeared before the tribunal of Caiaphas.† It is impossible to accept the first Gospel as a trustworthy record of primitive Christianity, and not to recognise the meaning of those sayings, in which He calls Himself the Son of Man, and asserts a relationship with the Father, which only His divinity can adequately explain. This Gospel, moreover, surrounds His death and resurrection with the same mystery

* Matt. x. 32, 33, xi. 27, xxii. 45. † Matt. xxvii. 63-65.

and Divine grandeur as the others, and seems to claim for them an equal dogmatic value. It is well to speak of a Hebrew Gospel, and a Hebrew Christianity; and there are no doubt distinctions of great interest and moment between the various Gospels; but it is to carry such distinctions to a quite unwarranted and arbitrary extent, to assert that the Christ of St Matthew is not substantially the same as the Christ of St Luke, and even of St John. He is seen in somewhat diverse aspects in all the four Gospels; more as the Messiah and King of Israel in St Matthew; more as the Teacher and Friend in St Luke and St Mark; more as the Divine Word in St John; but in all He is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." This He is no less really in St Matthew than in St John; and even, if we were granted nothing more than this primitive Gospel, we would find it utterly impossible to reconcile it with a mere natural development of the character and doctrine of Christ.

But what of Alexandria, and the peculiar form of speculative Judaism that there sprang up? Could this not have been the soil of the gospel? Could the seed which has grown into the tree of life not have started here? It is the only supposition which can claim a moment's attention.

Yet it is utterly incapable of shewing face when really looked at. We know what Alexandria was, and what Alexandrian religious speculation in the hands of the Jews was at the time of our Lord, as well as, or rather better than, we know what Jerusalem and its religious parties were at the same time. Philo, the great and comprehensive representative of Alexandrian Jewish speculation, was the contemporary of Jesus of Nazareth. He might have met, and even spoken with our Lord in a visit to the temple of Jerusalem which he describes. There are surface analogies between his doctrine and certain aspects of Christianity. Yet it is impossible to conceive anything in reality more different. The one is speculative, the other practical; the one is ideal, the other real; the one is a philosophy, or system of knowledge, the other is a religion, or "rule of life." Philo is in everything the philosopher, only working on certain inherited data of religious thought. As one has said, who will not be supposed to overrate the distinctions that separate him from the gospel: "Aristotle, Plato the sceptic, the Pythagorean, the Stoic, are Philo's real masters, from whom he derives his form of thought, his methodical arrangement, his rhetorical diction, and many of his moral lessons." His is "the spirit which puts knowledge in the place of truth, which confounds moral with physical purity, which seeks to attain the

perfection of the soul in abstraction and separation from matter, which attempts to account for evil by removing it to a distance from God, letting it drop by a series of descents from heaven to earth, which regards religion as an initiation into a mystery." Of all this there is not a trace in the Gospels. Of the abhorrence of matter, which pervaded every form of Oriental speculation, we find nothing.

"Another aspect," observes the same writer*—and we prefer putting the matter in words which cannot be supposed unduly urged—"Another aspect in which the religion of Philo differs from the religion of the gospel is, that the one is the religion of the few and the other of the many. The refined mysticism which Philo taught as the essence of religion is impossible for the poor. That the slave, ignorant as the brute, was equally with himself an object of solicitude to the God of Moses, would have been incredible to the great Jewish teacher of Alexandria. Neither had he any idea of a scheme of providence reaching to all men everywhere. Once or twice he holds up the Gentile as a reproof to the Jew; nothing was less natural to his thoughts than that the Gentiles were the true Israel. His gospel is not that of humanity, but of philosophers and of ascetics. Instead of converting the world, he would have men retreat from the world. . . . In another

* Professor Jowett—Epistles of St Paul, vol. i., 508.

way, also, the narrowness of Philo may be contrasted with the first Christian teaching. The object of the gospel is real, present, substantial, and the truths which are taught are very near to human nature—truths which meet its wants and soothe its sorrows. But in Philo the object is shadowy, distant, indistinct—whether an idea or a fact, we scarcely know—one which is in no degree commensurate with the wants of mankind in general, or even with those of a particular individual. As we approach, it vanishes away; if we analyse and criticise, it will dissolve in our hands; taken without criticism, it cannot exert much influence over the mind and conduct."

It is true that Philo speaks of the Logos or Word of God. This is to him, as to St John, the Revelation of God, and he might even use the apostle's words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." But that which is above all characteristic of the gospel—the incarnation of the Word in the person of Jesus of Nazareth—is wholly foreign to his mode of thought. He would have shrunk from the idea of the Logos being one whom "our eyes have seen and our hands have handled." "He would have turned away from the death of Christ."

From such a system as this how could the gospel spring, or even the idea of Christ's life and death? "It was mystical and dialectical,

not moral or spiritual; for the few, not for the many; for the Jewish Therapeute, not for all mankind. It was a literature, not a life; instead of a few short sayings, 'mighty to the pulling down of strongholds,' luxuriating in a profusion of rhetoric. It spoke of a Holy Ghost, of a Lord, of a Divine man, of a first and second Adam, of the faith of Abraham, of bread which came down from heaven; but knew nothing of the God who made of one blood all nations of the earth, of the victory over sin and death, of the cross of Christ. It was a picture, a shadow, a surface, a cloud above catching the rising light as he appeared. It was the reflection of a former world, not the birth of a new one."

Where, then, shall we look for any natural origin of Christianity? In what soil of previous thought or moral culture can we trace its roots? We dig and turn up every soil of the old world with the same result. It is not there. Anticipation and preparation we can trace everywhere —in Hellenism, in Alexandrianism, in Orientalism—above all, in the old Hebrew literature, which fed the souls of such as Simeon and Anna, "waiting for the Consolation of Israel." But nowhere can we find the germs which, without further divine planting, could have grown up into the tree of life. Nowhere can we trace the "root springing out of the dry

ground;" and yet we know it did. Nowhere do we see spiritual forces in operation which could conceivably have generated such a character and such a doctrine as those of Christ, and yet we know that that character and doctrine came forth as a "light of the world." While Jerusalem was sunk in formalism, or sensuality, or fanatical bigotry, and Alexandria was lost in theosophic dreams, and Athens in eclectic idolatry or curious inquiry, and Rome in lust of dominion or mere literary pride, this Light arose. Amid a despised and unmoral people there suddenly sprang up a moral power, which has proved itself the most exalted, the most vivifying, the most freshly enduring the world has ever seen. Arising in the East, it has proved peculiarly the strength and life of western civilisation—adapting itself to every emergency of human opinion and every crisis of human history; and, when seeming to be worn out in the long conflict with human folly, ignorance, and crime, rising into new vigour, clothing itself with fresh powers, and taking to itself nobler victories.

But why, it may be asked, should not a great moral genius have arisen in Judea 1800 years ago? Why should not a teacher of transcendent worth have sprung from the decaying stock of the old Hebrew culture, although Pharisee and Sadducee alike disowned Him, and no school can

claim the credit of Him; a Teacher who was capable, by His own natural powers, of reading a new meaning into old truths, and inspiring them with a new spirit and life? Why not? This is the question put in the most favourable manner for the Rationalist, and which we are by no means bound to accept. For it is his business to prove the affirmative, rather than ours to shew the negative. Yet, taking it up from this point, we answer, because there are no symptoms whatever of the rising of such a genius. The growth of moral ideas, like every other growth, can be traced first in "the bud, then in the ear, then in the full corn in the ear." We can trace the rise of Socrates, and the rise of Mohammed, to take two widely-different illustrations, in antecedent moral and social conditions, which did not indeed make them, but which explain them. All this historical connexion fails us with Jesus of Nazareth. We see no hints of such a phenomenon in the antecedent tendencies of the Jewish mind. The very capacity of appreciating moral truth had well-nigh perished in this mind, still more the capacity of originating it, and clothing it in a creative form, which should be the seed of a new life for humanity.

The Christ of the Gospels stands alone. As a moral portrait, He is without prototype or parallel—coming out from the dimness of the past a sudden and perfect creation. We look around,

and in all the gallery of history there is no likeness to Him. "So meek, so mild, so pitiful, yet so sublime, so terrible in His perfect sanctity." There are noble and magnanimous countenances—but none such as His. There are splendid characters—but they are pale beside the lustre of His purity and beneficence. The quaint rectitude of a Socrates, and the hardy virtue of a Confucius, are dim and poor and imperfect beside the holy sympathy, the loving sacrifice, the magnanimous wisdom, that shone forth in Jesûs of Nazareth. To suppose such a character to be a natural development of Judaism seems among the wildest of dreams.

But shall we, then, suppose that such a character never really existed, save in the imagination of the followers of Jesus? Does this free us of the difficulty? If it be hard, nay, impossible to conceive the natural development of such a character in point of fact, is it not still more impossible to conceive the ideal of such a character forming itself in the imagination of a few poor and ignorant Jews? Where were they to gather its elements?—from their dreams of a Messianic kingdom and glory?—from their broken and expiring traditions?—from their own wild hopes and vague enthusiasm? There were no other sources from which the ideal could come; there are no others suggested. Surely there never was

a beautiful creation, an ideal more perfect than poet has ever formed, or philosophy conceived, ascribed to so strange a parentage. To believe in such a possibility of divinely-harmonious imagination in four writers widely separated from one another, with no remarkable peculiarities of genius, with common peculiarities of weakness, according to the supposition, (for they all equally believe in the miracles they describe,) is harder than any belief that orthodoxy demands of us. One writer might be conceived inventing a lofty ideal, but that four such writers should unconsciously combine to form the ideal of the Gospels is utterly inconceivable.

Then look at the age. It is the most unromantic and unmythical of ages—critical and speculative in Philo and in Plutarch—stern and denunciatory in Tacitus and in Juvenal—didactic and descriptive in Josephus and Pliny—everywhere ingenious and clever in its wickedness, but nowhere imaginative—utterly without creative ideality. Could three unknown writers have given us the portrait of the synoptic Gospels in such an age? Could the marvellous ideal of the fourth Gospel, higher than, yet perfectly consonant with the others, have come from a mere teacher at Ephesus in the first or second century? We know what sort of religious literature the second century produced—nay, what sort of religious romance it produced. Can any-

thing be more unlike the Gospel of St John than the "Shepherd of Hermas?"

What is our conclusion, then? We are shut up to the Divine origin of Christianity. We search everywhere for its natural fountain-head, and cannot find it. We turn to theories of unbelief, and find them dissolve to our touch. What is left, but that we listen to the gospel itself? If it did not spring from older streams of human thought, it must have sprung immediately from the great Fountain of Divine thought. If not natural, it must have been supernatural. There is a *dignus vindice nodus*, and we call in the *Vindex*.

VII.

THE DIRECT WITNESS.

THE special evidence for the Divine origin of Christianity, however, must always lie in an appeal to the miraculous facts which lie at its basis. Whatever may be the difficulties surrounding these facts to modern contemplation, it is perfectly evident that they are not to be got over. They are not to be explained away either by any sleight of naturalism, or any ingenious system of ideology. They cannot be relegated to some vague domain of faith, and held in the mid-air of a religious reverie which does not know what to make of them. They must either be accepted or denied *as facts*. Their proof, as such, is either

sufficient or insufficient. They are either parts of authentic history, or they are not.

We have already seen that they cannot be set aside on any presumption of impossibility. It is not competent to do this without denying altogether a Theistic interpretation of nature and history; and this interpretation is what our reason and our moral being alike demand. Supposing that there is a Supreme Power distinct from nature, and ruling it and all things, then beyond question this Power may interrupt the sequences which Himself has established for any wise and good purpose. The question is cleared of preconception, and remains one of fact. It was peculiarly necessary to look at it in the former point of view to begin with, because it is to this point of view that the question will always run back, and find its chief interest for the reason. In our time, discussion has more than ever centred here. But it is now necessary to look at it in the latter point of view as a question of fact, and to see upon what basis of distinct historical evidence the Christian miracles rest.

It is of the very nature of such an inquiry as this to run into an accumulation of details, and minute questions of the balance of evidence, and the weight to be given to special circumstances as they come before us. The strength of the historical evidence for the Christian miracles

unquestionably lies in the combination of particulars which point to one conclusion, and leaves the mind at length satisfied that there can be no other conclusion. It would be altogether beside our purpose, however, to make any attempt to set forth these particulars here. It is doubtful, indeed, how far any mere book of evidences can do this. Such a task, rightly viewed, is one for the student to enter upon himself and sift to the bottom, irrespective of summary representations on one side or the other. All we can do here is to indicate the broad lines or issues of the evidence, and especially the scheme of argument into which the facts form themselves, and by which they bear upon our credit and assent.

Whether or not the Christian miracles must be accepted as facts, is plainly a question of testimony. This the apostles themselves constantly felt. They continually put the case in this way; and particularly appeal to the great miracle of the resurrection as the express ground of their mission—the authoritative warrant of their preaching. "This Jesus hath God raised up," says St Peter, in his Pentecostal sermon, "*whereof we all are witnesses.*" Again, with an unhesitating allusion to facts known to them as well as to him—the air of reality breathing in every word—"The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers,

hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised up from the dead; *whereof we are witnesses.*" Equally so in his address to Cornelius —"And *we are witnesses* of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem." The same ground is virtually occupied by St Paul and all the apostles. They appeal to facts which they themselves knew, and to which they testified, especially to the great fact of the resurrection. It is quite evident that, in their opinion, the claims of Christianity hang upon the admission of these facts. If not admitted—if the alleged facts could not substantiate themselves—their cause seemed a hopeless one. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

The Christian miracles, therefore, are *facts* to be proved, and the proof offered is the personal witness or testimony of the apostles. This testimony must be examined and sifted like any other testimony. What is it worth? What are its elements of trustworthiness or veracity? Suppose you find men come forward to bear witness

to any remarkable fact or series of facts, you inquire into the character of the men, their possible motives—disinterested or not—their personal relation to the fact—immediate or not. In short, all testimony must be thoroughly examined and weighed, and is valid or not according to certain principles of sense and reason, which, however difficult to define, are intelligible by all. In this respect the evidence for the Christian miracles is on the level of all other evidence. From the very remarkable character of the facts, it must, in truth, be criticised with a special keenness, and judged with a special severity.

But in the case of the evidence for the Christian miracles, as in the case of all historical testimony, there is a presumption of an important kind. The testimony is not immediately before us. It survives only by tradition. The living witnesses are long since gone; we cannot call them into court and put their veracity to the proof by cross question of their reports, and examination of their personal look and manner. We have only the affidavits, so to speak, which they left behind, and which have been handed down to us. First of all, therefore, it is plain we must prove these affidavits. We must shew that the statements which they left were really their own statements. In other words, the genu-

ineness of the evangelical testimony must be settled before we investigate the value and force of it. If any doubt rest upon this preliminary point, the conclusions we draw would be vitiated from the foundation. Supposing a witness in an important case to have died, and his dying declaration to have been put in in evidence, it is plain that this declaration must be proved to have really proceeded from him, before it can be held to be evidence at all. In the same manner, the Gospel of St John—shall we say, for it gives force to select a particular example—must be shewn to be really his testimony, to have proceeded from him, and truly to represent him or his age. It professes to do so in the most solemn manner. "This is the disciple," it says at the close, "which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things, and we believe that his testimony is true." This profession of authorship must be substantiated by reasonable evidence before the substance of the testimony claims our notice.

The question of the genuineness of the evangelical testimony, therefore, must be determined as a prime condition of the validity of that testimony. This question, in fact, very much involves the whole subject, as it now stands in the light of higher and more comprehensive methods of historical investigation than those which prevailed in the last century. There is

now no longer any dispute as to the character of the apostles. The talk of imposture, as we formerly said, has died away, or only survives in obscure corners of infidelity, from which all rational investigation is banished. There is no historical student doubts that the men who planted Christianity in the world were men of noble and honest character, and of self-denying zeal and labours—men who profoundly believed their own testimony, and lived and died to shew their faith in it—men, to use the words of Paley's well-known thesis, who "professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone, in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief in these accounts; and who also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct." All this may be said to be beyond dispute. So far the "trial of the witnesses" is unnecessary. And to this extent, perhaps, some ridicule of the Christian apologies of the past century may be excused. It was the thought of a hard, superficial, and unhistorical age,—unhistorical in spirit, notwithstanding the one or two great histories which it produced,—to conceive of the possibility of Christianity being an imposture, and the apostles being the impostors. A truer, more correct, and more comprehensive spirit of historical inquiry has dissipated every

such thought. It is universally recognised that it would be impossible to account for any great movement in human history on such principles. The very conception of the movement, and the undeniable character of it throughout, implies principles of a totally different kind.

The real, and well-nigh the whole inquiry, therefore, has come to be, not as to the character of the apostles, but as to their genuine historical position; not what they were, but who they were, and how far we truly possess the accounts of what they said and did. These are the only points of inquiry that really divide those that are entitled to have any opinion on the subject.

This will be more apparent in carrying out the argument to a conclusion. In the meantime, let us turn to the important point which it involves as to the genuineness of the Gospels.

I.—GENUINENESS OF THE GOSPELS.

This is really the essential point; and modern unbelief has sufficiently recognised this by directing its main attacks in this quarter. It has been the pride of German criticism to analyse with the most rigid severity all the particulars of evidence for the genuineness of the Gospels, and to expose every weakness that they may seem to shew. It has certainly done its worst in this

respect, and with a skill which can never be rivalled.

It must be granted—every one who knows the subject will grant that the inquiry into the genuineness of the Gospels is not without its difficulties. It is by no means the easy-going question that it appears in some popular summaries. It has its elements of uncertainty, and presents many nice points of criticism which cannot be discussed here. But it also presents certain main features which may be plainly set forth. The nature of the question will be apparent, and the conclusive force of the evidence upon which the Christian affirmation rests will abundantly shew itself—making every allowance for difficulties.

The inquiry, in its direct form, is to this effect—What is the evidence that the Gospels were really the productions of their professed authors? Technically, a book is said to be genuine when it was really written by the author whose name it bears. Certain plays of Shakspeare are universally admitted to be genuine. The evidence that he himself really composed them is satisfactory to every mind. Others, such as the three parts of 'Henry VI.,' 'Titus Andronicus,' and 'Pericles' are of doubtful genuineness—that is to say, it remains, in some degree, a question whether he was really their author, or at least their sole author.

Again, there are eight books of the 'Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity' attributed to Hooker, five of which are beyond question genuine. They were published under his name in circumstances which leave no doubt that they really came from his pen. The remaining three books were published after his death, and in circumstances which led to suspicions of their having been tampered with. It remains a question whether these three books, and especially the sixth, really represent Hooker's opinions, although no one can doubt that he was, in a general sense, the author of them, as well as of the five published in his life. These two illustrations may serve to shew something of what is meant when it is proposed to inquire into the genuineness of a book. Genuineness may be vitiated either by a lack of evidence connecting it with the supposed author, or by corruption of what the author has really written. This is the question, strictly so-called, and these cases serve very well to illustrate it.

But the question in regard to the Gospels is substantially broader, and not exactly met by these illustrations. For example, whatever may be the doubts as to Shakspeare having been the author of three parts of 'Henry VI.,' there can be no doubt that they belong to the Shaksperian age. They represent the same epoch in our literature as his early plays; they are expressions

of the same phase of our national intellectual life. There can be no question as to this. In the same manner, there can be no question that all the books of Hooker's Polity belong to the same age, whether he was really in a strict sense the author of them all. Now, it is this broader rather than the narrower view which may be said to cover the case of the Gospels.

If the Gospels can be carried back to the first century, the direct authorship in every case is not absolutely vital. Whether the existing Gospel of St Matthew, for example, is really the direct production of the apostle, or only the translation of an original Hebrew Gospel of the apostle by some friend or associate, would not really affect the conclusion at issue. There it is!—a record of what happened in the knowledge and experience of the apostles, by one who was undoubtedly their familiar, and whose veracity is to be tested according to all the circumstances of the case. This is the very profession of St Luke. It seemed "good to him," (although not an apostle himself,) "having had a perfect understanding of all things from the first," to write them in order to his friend Theophilus, that he might "know the certainty of those things wherein he had been instructed." The real question here is whether this profession be a genuine profession on the part of a Christian writer of the first age, or, in other words,

whether the document which it opens can be traced up to the first century, rather than the more technical inquiry as to whether the writer was St Luke, the companion of St Paul, or some other. Even in the case of the fourth Gospel, the fact of its existence in the end of the apostolic age is really the important question. Supposing this settled, its authorship cannot well admit of a doubt.

The nature of the evidence, then, which must be sought to establish the genuineness of the Gospels is obvious. We must get traces of their existence all along from the present time to the apostolic age. In point of real exigency, we must get traces of their existence from a point in the third, or the end of the second century, when it is not possible for any one to doubt that they did exist on to the time of the apostles. It is needless, and apt to be misleading, to confound together such evidence as that of Eusebius, of Origen, and Hippolytus with the evidence of earlier writers. There can be no question of the existence of the Gospels in the time of Origen. One might, with as much reason, require evidence of their existence in the time of Augustine, or of Gregory the Great, or of Calvin. Origen wrote commentaries on them no less than Calvin, and prepared a text of them.

We may ascend the stream of Christian his-

tory further, and say that there can be no question of the existence of the Gospels in the time of Irenæus, Clemens of Alexandria, and of Tertullian of Carthage, (170–200,) the fifth generation from the beginning of the Apostolic era—*the third from the termination of it.* It is impossible to read either of these writers without feeling that they wrote in the full light of the Gospel history; and, more than this, that they were familiar with *our Gospels*, under the same names that they bear to us. One well-known passage of Irenæus is so emphatic, that we shall content ourselves with quoting it:—"After that our Lord rose from the dead," he says, "and they (the apostles) were endowed from above with the power of the Holy Ghost coming down upon them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They went forth to all the ends of the earth, preaching good tidings from God, and announcing celestial peace to all men, one and all of them being alike endowed with the Gospel of God. St Matthew, then among the Hebrews, put forth an evangelical record in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and founding the Church there. After their departure, St Mark, the disciple and interpreter of St Peter, delivered to us in writing the things that had been preached by St Peter; and St Luke, the companion of St Paul, put down in a book the

Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon His breast, likewise published a Gospel while he dwelt at Ephesus."

The existence of the four Gospels, then, towards the close of the second century, is an undoubted fact of history. There *is no fact of history more capable of proof.* The evidence upon which we accept, without hesitation, the productions of many of the classic authors, is not to be compared for a moment in fulness or detail to that which can be furnished at this stage for the genuineness of the Gospels. Any difficulties that the subject involves, therefore, begin higher up than this. There cannot be said to be a question up to this point.

Now, before ascending a further stage, to the second generation from the end of the Apostolic era—the age of Justin Martyr—let us notice what we have really gained in the universally-admitted existence of the Gospels at this later stage. We have found them at Lyons (Irenæus was Bishop of Lyons)—at Alexandria—at Carthage; and not merely diffused at these widely-separated centres of Græco-Roman civilisation, but held in authority at them all. Tertullian and Clemens receive them with the same reverence, the same

* Contra Hæreses, lib. i., cap. 1, Ed. Steeren, 413.—The first part of the passage is not preserved in the Greek; but the second and important part, regarding the Gospels, is.

sacred regard, as Irenæus. They are "evangelic and apostolic writings," "sacred books," "our digesta." It is obviously impossible that they could have suddenly started into such a position of authority as this. The statements of Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clemens are, in their very nature, evidence, not merely that the Gospels existed in their time, but that they had existed long before their time. These writers had no suspicion of the possibility of a *recent* origin of the Gospels. They express their belief that they belong to the apostolic age, and were the production of the apostolic men to whom they were ascribed, not as a conclusion which they had argued out, but as a plain matter of fact, which they knew beyond all dispute, and which the Church universally recognised. Is it conceivable, in the face of what they say, that the Gospel of St John could have been a Gnostic production of the middle of the second century? Do they speak as men living in the midst, or even in the wake of the fermenting process through which (according to this theory) the new religion must have been passing? There never were men spoke less in this way than Irenæus and Tertullian. They are already the dogmatists of the new faith, the men of tradition, who *look backward* to an *authoritative* Scripture—an "evangelical canon."

Carrying with us, then, this fair inference, we

take an upward step to the age of Justin Martyr, (130–170.) Here, it may be said, is the great knot of the inquiry into the genuineness of the Gospels. The peculiar language of Justin Martyr has introduced the main element of uncertainty into the question. He nowhere quotes our Gospels by name. He nowhere mentions the Gospel of St Matthew, nor of St Mark, nor of St John as the sources from which he draws his lengthened statements of the evangelical history and the evangelical institutions. On the contrary, he constantly refers to certain sources which he styles, not 'Gospels' of St Matthew or of St John, but 'Memoirs of the Apostles.' The question is, Were these 'Memoirs of the Apostles' our Gospels? In the time of Lardner and of Paley little doubt was supposed to exist that they were. But since modern inquiry has been turned to the subject, it has been greatly argued, and an equally confident decision arrived at on opposite sides. Bishop Marsh did not hesitate to declare in the negative, "that Justin did not quote our Gospels."*

As a question of mere criticism, it must be held to be a difficult one; but there are certain general considerations which seem to incline the

* Ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων. The words ἃ καλεῖται εὐαγγέλια, Apol. 1, p. 98, are supposed by many (Bishop Marsh among others) to be an interpolation, and nothing can be founded on them.

balance of evidence very strongly in the affirmative, notwithstanding the confident statement of Bishop Marsh, and the conclusion of many German scholars.

1. The numerous passages which Justin quotes from his 'Memoirs of the Apostles,' although failing in verbal coincidence throughout with the text of our Gospels, yet everywhere substantially agree with this text, with the exception of two very unimportant particulars. There is no difference in the outline of *facts* given by Justin from the Memoirs and the outline of facts given in the Gospels. The *verbal* coincidence with the text of the Gospels is sometimes exact, and sometimes so great as to appear exact in a translation; while Justin quotes from the Old Testament with something of the same degree of verbal inexactness. Farther, the account which he gives of the origin of his 'Memoirs' corresponds with the origin of our Gospels, viz., that two were written by apostles, and two by companions of the apostles.*

2. The entire absence of all allusion to 'Memoirs of the Apostles,' independent of the Gospels, on the part of Irenæus, or any of the writers of his time, strongly militates against the supposition that such Memoirs could have existed. What could have become of them? The books that Justin quotes were evidently authoritative

* Dial. cum Trypho.

books—sacred writings. He mentions that they were read in the assemblies of the Christians every Sunday. How is there no other trace of them? Supposing them not to be our Gospels, can we conceive that a series of apostolic Memoirs different from our Gospels were known to Justin, and to no other writer whatever? Everything seems against such a supposition. On the other hand, is it not very conceivable that a writer of Justin's classical peculiarities and training—with his head full of Gentile associations and reminiscences—should have preferred to quote the Gospels under the general name which he makes use of? Let it be remembered that he was addressing a heathen emperor, and through him the Gentile world at large. It appears consonant both with his character and his purpose, not to have used the peculiar Christian name of these documents—if, indeed, this name had come into vogue before his time—but such a general and easily-intelligible designation as he has adopted.

3. When we consider the position of Justin in relation to that of Irenæus, and the writers of the succeeding generation, it seems certain that he must have known our Gospels. Diffused to Alexandria, and Lyons, and Carthage, and everywhere regarded with the same feelings of sacred reverence, it is impossible that a man like Justin, who had travelled about in search of

spiritual wisdom, who had become a Christian after patient inquiry and study of Scripture, could have been ignorant of documents which had attained such a wide circulation, and such a unique authority in the age immediately following his own. The light of that age must go with us in ascending to the time of Justin, and by it we must interpret the statements of this writer. The manner in which the Gospels are spoken of by Irenæus and Tertullian is unintelligible without recognising their well-established authority through successive generations. The generation of Justin must have known them; he himself must have known them; and although the manner in which he writes does constitute a difficulty, this difficulty is nothing to that of supposing him ignorant of them, while he was yet plainly in possession of all the facts they convey.

When we put all the circumstances together, and consider the clear presumption that Justin must have known the Gospels, with the equally plain presumption that such Memoirs as he quotes, supposing them to have been other than the Gospels, must have been known to many writers besides himself—(of which, however, there is no trace)—the evidence seems to be as conclusive as such evidence ever can be, that the 'Memoirs of the Apostles' were nothing else than our Gospels.

Beyond Justin Martyr, we reach such writers as Ignatius and Clemens Romanus, (who is really within the apostolic age,) and—what is more important than either for our purpose—the fragments of the early Gnostics. Anything like direct allusion to the Gospels, or quotations from them by name, is not to be found in these writers. But this is only what might have been expected. Ignatius and Clemens Romanus both lived in immediate proximity to the apostles. The former was a disciple of St John, the latter was a contemporary of St Paul and St John. These men knew, therefore, the apostolic traditions after the same immediate and living manner as the apostles themselves did. It was not so much any *record* of Christ's sayings and doings to which their thoughts turned, as the sayings and doings themselves, surviving in the Christian consciousness of their time, and which they had learned at the feet of those who directly reported the one and were witnesses of the others. There is nothing wonderful in the fact, that men who were themselves within the immediate circle of the evangelical testimony, who were, so to speak, witnesses only at second-hand, should not have made any formal appeal to documents which merely embodied what they themselves knew by heart, and which could not add anything to their direct personal knowledge.

Such quotations from the Gospels as do occur in these fathers exactly answer to the views now expressed of their position. They are, for the most part, brief and striking sayings of our Lord, freely given, and as they would occur to a person who had learned them by oral instruction rather than the study of a document. It is needless to detail these quotations. They are known to all Christian scholars, and may be found indicated in any edition of the apostolic fathers.* By themselves they do not prove much. Looking at them independently of the position of the writers, they would not help our inquiry much; but looking at the position of the writers, and the whole train of thought and association in which they occur, they support the broadest conclusions we could wish to found upon them. The letters, both of Ignatius and Clemens, are unintelligible apart from the *facts* contained in the Gospels, and the spirit which they reflect. The very existence and character of the men themselves are unintelligible, save in the light of the Gospel history.

We have mentioned the heretical fragments of this age immediately succeeding the apostles, and were our purpose that of minute critical inquiry, they would claim a great deal of attention.

* Hefele, for example, in his well-known edition, marks them all carefully; and any student would better have recourse to the original than to Paley's summaries.

It must suffice simply to say, that even in the view of so extremely liberal a theologian as Bunsen, they establish quite conclusively the existence of the third and fourth Gospels about the year 120. "Basilides," he says, "not only quotes (besides St Luke's second chapter) the Gospel of St John, it is also evident that his whole metaphysical development is an attempt to connect a cosmogonic system with St John's prologue, and with the person of Christ." *

Altogether there seems to be an entirely trustworthy, though not throughout its length an

* Bunsen's Hippolytus, vol. i., p. 381.—It will be obvious to every scholar that we have omitted to notice one important witness to the genuineness of the Gospels of St Matthew and St Mark, viz., Papias, who may be considered a contemporary of Ignatius as he is reputed to have been with him a pupil of St John. In a fragment of this writer, preserved by Eusebius, he expressly mentions the Gospels of St Matthew and St Mark, and says, (as Irenæus after him,) that the former wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, and the latter collected his materials from the preaching of Peter. It is well known, however, that this fragment of Papias has been the subject of much dispute, both in respect of its own genuineness, and its value even supposing it to be genuine.

It would be a great service to the student of the Christian Evidences if some scholar would collect into a small volume all the passages bearing upon the genuineness of the Gospels, from the early fathers down to Origen. The passages should stand by themselves, in the original languages, in clear chronological sequence. The argument founded thereupon should be detached by itself. This would be the best manual on the subject that could be put into the hands of the

equally clear, line of evidence for the existence of the Gospels from the conspicuous light of the age of Irenæus to the apostolic era. The more all the facts are studied in a fair and unprejudiced spirit, without any view to theories of one kind or another, the more strongly will the evidence unfold itself in many indirect turns, in many combining hints. It is difficult, in fact, to convey by a summary statement anything like the full conviction that an impartial and comprehensive survey leaves upon the mind; while it is always easy, in the case of such complicated evidence, to put forward weak points, and to insinuate a negative. Yet a substantial line of evidence remains after all assaults. The Gospels are intelligible as the productions of the first century—they are intelligible in no other way. The various shifts that have been made to explain them otherwise, only render this conclusion the more inevitable. The mind returns to it, after wandering in the quagmire of critical speculation, with a sensation of relief not

student. The work has been done on a large scale, with reference to the New Testament writers generally, by Kirchhofer, with a view to the history of the canon, ("Quellensammlung zur Geschichte des Neutestamentlichen Canons bis auf Hieronymus,") but the work we desiderate would be of a more limited and special kind—confined to the subject of the Gospels, and plainly exhibiting every element of historical proof regarding them. It is uncritical to mix up such very different subjects as the genuineness of the Gospels and the genuineness of the Epistles of St Paul.

only moral but intellectual. The reason *can rest here*, if there are still difficulties that keep it questioning. Otherwise it is tossed on an angry sea of doubt, whose "waters only cast up mire and dirt."

II.—Worth of the Apostolic Testimony.

Supposing the genuineness of the Gospels established, what is the position occupied by the inquirer? He stands face to face with the apostolic age. He has ascended to direct converse with St John at Ephesus, and St Matthew in Palestine, and St Mark, the companion of St Peter, and St Luke, the friend of St Paul. What then? Take the case of St John, as before, for illustration. A single case sufficiently answers our purpose, and the question is thereby cleared of some confusion. The case of St John has come, from its natural importance, to be the one which, between the extreme German school and their opponents, is felt to involve the whole question.

Supposing, then, the genuineness of the Gospel of St John to be satisfactorily established; the inquirer finds himself in immediate contact with one of the noblest and most truthful personalities that distinguish the page of history. He finds himself in communion with a mind dwelling on the very eminence of truth; clear, faithful,

and enlightened, and thoroughly rational, as well as profoundly contemplative; with an open eye for the truth of life and of fact, as well as an inner eye for the truth of the Spirit. "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things." You are supposed to have removed all doubts upon this point, and to have satisfied yourself that St John of Ephesus is the very man with whom, in the Gospel of St John, you have been holding intercourse, and to whose voice of witness you have been listening. Can you have any doubt of the truth of his witness? When he tells you that Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave, and sets around the miraculous occurrence the most natural and beautiful setting of family affection and piety; when he tells you how Jesus himself rose again from the dead according to the Scripture, and was seen of Mary Magdalene and Peter, and had the "print of the nails" in His hands and the spear wound in His side handled by the doubting Thomas—can you have any question of his deep sincerity? It is not possible that the idea of falsehood can enter into any reasonable mind in such a case. The character of the venerable apostle, and the very tone of his words—instinct at every point with a burning truthfulness—utterly repel such an idea.

But although there cannot be falsehood, may there not be delusion? May St John and the

other apostles not have been mistaken? This is the only alternative of unbelief, and it may certainly be put. It is possible for the best men to be mistaken. A fixed, truthful, and lofty nature is no guarantee against religious delusion, as many examples prove. But look carefully at the ground on which you stand, before you allow such a supposition for a moment in the present case. You profess to be satisfied that the Gospel of St John is really the witness of the apostle; you profess to be satisfied that this witness is true. What is the effect of this in relation to the question now started? St John is not content to tell us that Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave, and that He himself rose again from the dead; he is not content to affirm his own belief that Jesus was the Christ, and the "Word of God;" but he narrates at length, how he and the other disciples associated with Jesus; how they constantly saw Him in private and public for three years; how they themselves and many others were the witnesses of the mighty works which He did. It is no mere assertion of preternatural gifts secretly exercised—it is no mere statement of wonders done in a corner that he sets before us; but it is the detailed picture of a supernatural life—of a life which, whilst moving amongst men, shewed itself in all its manifestations to be more than human—to be effluent, and richly so, of

Divine power in all it did. Was there room for mistake in such a case? St John was near to Christ at every point. It was impossible to have more opportunities of knowing what really happened than he had. He himself saw, and he says that many Jews who knew the man from his youth saw, a man who had been born blind restored to sight by Jesus; he was one of those who gathered up the fragments from the miraculous feast of the five thousand; he came with his Master to Bethany, and saw Him as He approached, "groaning in Himself," the cave where the sisters had laid the body of their brother, heard Him cry "with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth," and saw the dead come forth at the mighty voice, "bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face bound about with a napkin;" he was one of the company of disciples to whom Jesus "shewed Himself now the third time after He was risen from the dead." Can we conceive that he was possibly mistaken or deluded in all this? What guarantee of fact more can we have than the statement of a truthful and clear-sighted man, that he was present and saw that to which he testifies?

And let it be remembered, that in so stating the case, we are purposely, for the sake of illustration, understating it. We are isolating, so to speak, the testimony of St John, and looking at it by itself. But the general apostolic testimony,

differing in particulars, is one in substance. It is the same Supernatural Life that all the Evangelists set forth. To the same great facts they all testify. Or at least, their differences are such—making every allowance—as still to leave a conjoined testimony to the most important of the Christian miracles. They, one and all, bear the like witness to the resurrection. St Peter and St John alike appeal to it as a fact within their personal cognisance. St Paul claims about the same relation to it: "Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." Is it possible to conceive that not merely one but all the apostles were mistaken? Were three such men as St Peter, St John, and St Paul likely to be the subjects of the same illusion? They were men in some respects of very different character and temperament; their personal relations were not close, at least those of St Paul with the others were not so; he had not been subjected to the same personal influences as they had in companionship with our Lord; he was a man of a different training—a preacher of the same truth with them, rather than an adherent of the same party—if it be allowable, for the sake of our argument, to use such language. That they were all equally the victims of illusion as to the resurrection of our Lord seems an incredible supposition. That the miraculous fact which they proclaimed as the ground of their faith—apart

from which they felt that all their preaching was vain—that this was after all no fact, but a mere dream, which had inspired them, seems an alternative utterly irreconcileable with faith in human testimony, or the credibility of history.

Look for a moment at the case which perhaps always most readily occurs in contrast to the origin of Christianity—the case of Mohammed, and the rise of Mohammedanism. Mohammed, no doubt, succeeded in inspiring his friends with a belief in his Divine Mission. He professed to have special communication with God, and his followers credited his profession. But who were his followers in the first instance? His wife, his nephew, his freedman, and then his kinsmen or connexions in various degrees. The devotion of these disciples, indeed, is one of the most marvellous facts of history. But it did not claim to rest on any personal cognisance of the Divine communication which Mohammed was supposed to have received. Neither Kadijah, nor Ali, nor Zeid, nor Abu Beker professed to be witnesses of the alleged visits of the angel Gabriel to the prophet. Nay, these visits were always made in circumstances of solitude, which excluded the possibility of any other evidence save that of Mohammed himself. The belief which he inspired was entirely personal. He made no appeal to miracles. He

could never have said, "If ye believe not me, believe my works. The works that I do bear witness of me." There is an entire absence of reliance on the testimony of others to his prophetic character and pretensions. All of Divine that he arrogates is wrapped up in his own assertion, and his wonderful confidence in his own powers.

It is scarcely possible to conceive any greater contrast to the evidence on which the Divine origin of Christianity exists. The appeal of Christ is grounded, not on secret communications with God, but on works openly wrought in the face of men. The witnesses of these works, St Matthew, St John, and St Mark for St Peter,* are the men who record them. It is possible to conceive that one or other may have been mistaken, but that they should have been

* The position of St Luke, as an independent witness, is somewhat more complicated. He was not himself *an eye-witness nor a minister of the word*, nor does he represent any one who was so in the sense in which St Mark represents St Peter. He professes, however, to have compiled and arranged his narrative from the testimony of those who "from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," and, moreover, to have had himself a "perfect understanding of all things from the first." No doubt, therefore, rests upon his position, only it is not so obviously related by personal contact to the apostolic age as that of the other evangelists. The uniformity of the tradition which connects St Mark with St Peter, and gives to his Gospel a distinct value, as representing the witness of that Apostle, is known to all students of Christian history.

all together mistaken, and in the same manner, baffles conception. Supposing the men to have been thoroughly honest—which is beyond question—supposing, further, that we have in the Gospels, as we have argued, the very record which they left, the conclusion is inevitable, upon all the grounds which determine the validity of historical testimony, that the Christian miracles did really happen as represented, and that, of course, the Divine mission which they certify was a fact. The appeal of St Peter on the day of Pentecost is still an appeal cogent for us across the lapse of eighteen centuries—"*Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him.*"

VIII.

THE INTERNAL WITNESS.

BUT Christianity is not merely an historic fact. It is also a spiritual truth. While appealing, therefore, to our rational assent, it must also and eminently appeal to our moral assent—our "conscience in the sight of God." This internal witness of Christianity is "evidence" of its Divine origin, and was felt to be so by the apostle Paul. It was a sure strength to him in making known the revelation of God in Christ. It made him address with equal confidence the moralists of Athens and the devout men of the synagogue everywhere. The gospel which he preached he felt to be "the manifestation of the truth."

There is in man, as his history everywhere shews, divine aspirations which give him no rest till they become fixed on objects fitted to satisfy them. It is the profession of Christianity that it meets these aspirations more thoroughly than any other religion. It is its peculiar boast, that it alone is adequate to meet the wants of the awakened and inquiring soul. It is obvious that the question comes to this. The mere satisfaction that a religion gives to its votaries could never be held as an evidence of its divinity. There can be no question of evidence where there is no inquiry. And every one knows that the very absence of the spirit which prompts inquiry betokens the most perfect satisfaction. There are none so satisfied with their religion—be it Romanism or Protestantism—be it Islamism, or Brahminism, or Buddhism—as those who have never once seriously inquired what its origin was, or what constitute its evidences, or even its meaning. They are what they are from the uncontrollable influences of training and habit, which have left them without any independent will or capacity of reflective discernment. And how large a proportion of the human race are in this condition it is needless to say. There can be no question as to true or false, so far as their mere experience of religion goes. They are satisfied, not because they have proved and found the truth, but because the ques-

tion, What is truth? has never occurred to them. They have never reached the stage of reflection.

When it is said, therefore, that Christianity approves itself to the conscience, it is of course meant that it does so to the educated and inquiring conscience. As a subject of reflection, it stands where other systems fall. It is the only divine philosophy. In Jesus Christ, and in Him alone, as one has said, "all contradictions are reconciled." The hints of truth which shine out in other religions, darkening often rather than illuminating by their cross-lights, are in Him blended and harmonised. "He is the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

This is plainly a question to be settled by a fair appeal to the facts of man's moral being. Do these inner facts witness to the revealed facts of the gospel? Is there a true correspondence between them of subject and object, of want and supply, of necessity and remedy? *There is*, many of the most profound moral thinkers that the world has known have answered. They have examined human nature, and laid bare its moral characteristics, and here, in Christianity, they have said, is its only satisfaction—its only true wisdom and strength. This was the great idea on which Pascal designed his work on behalf of

Christianity, the fragments of which are all that survive in his well-known 'Pensées.' No one can say, certainly, that Pascal shrinks from a full inquiry, or that he was insensible to the varied and complex aspects of human nature. It is his very comprehension of these aspects, and the manner in which he feels himself tossed from the one to the other, unable to rest in any, seeing the weak point in all, that drives him on to the recognition of the divine truth of Christianity, as alone meeting them and blending them into harmony. Man, he argues, is fallen and yet great. He is miserable, and yet he cherishes the instincts of divine happiness. "His very miseries prove his greatness. They are the miseries of a lord—of a dethroned sovereign." Mere human religions or philosophies have failed, or proved their incapacity, in the manner in which they have recognised the one without the other of these moral features of humanity. Some have appealed to man's sense of weakness, others to his sense of greatness. The one has degraded him unduly, the other has exalted him unduly. With the one he has been little more than animal, with the other he has been as a God. "If, on the one hand," he says, "they have recognised the dignity of man, they have ignored his corruption, and avoiding sloth, they have plunged into pride. If, on the other hand, they have recognised the weakness of his nature, they have

ignored its dignity, and avoiding vanity, they have plunged into despair."

The diverse sects of philosophers—Stoics and Epicureans, Platonists and Pyrrhonists—appear to have sprung from one or other of these half-representations of humanity. Christianity alone unites both halves. It alone answers to the essential doubleness of man's nature; and by its living hold of both ideas of dignity and corruption, of excellence and sin, shews itself to be a divine power of moral education for the race.

"Christianity can alone cure at once pride and despair; not by expelling the one by the other, according to the wisdom of the world, but by expelling both the one and the other by the simplicity of the gospel. For it teaches the good, that while it elevates them to be partakers of the Divine nature, they yet carry with them, in their elevation, the sense of that corruption which renders them in life the victims of error, misery, sin, and death; while, at the same time, it proclaims to the worst that they are capable of the grace of redemption. Thus touching with humility those whom it justifies, and with consolation those whom it condemns, it tempers with due measure fear and hope, through the two-fold capacity in all of grace and sin. It abases infinitely more than reason, yet without producing despair; it elevates more than mere natural pride, yet without producing inflation. Alone

free from error, to it alone belongs the task of instructing and disciplining men. Who then can refuse to believe and adore its heavenly light?"

Such is the singular adaptation of Christianity to our moral necessities, as it appeared to a great thinker, a man of keen and noble intellect as well as deep and true affection. The thought of such a man is not necessarily convincing to others, but it claims our regard more than most thoughts. When a man of profound reflective capacity, and varied moral experience, in whom the qualities of reason, imagination, and feeling reach well-nigh the highest range of which they are capable, tells us that he has found in Christianity what he has found nowhere else, what all other systems only partially comprehend and express, surely this is in some degree evidence of the truth of Christianity. Such a man was Pascal. His mind was of a rarely inquisitive and even sceptical turn. He had studied Descartes, and he had studied Montaigne. He had tried Dogmatism and Pyrrhonism, as he styled the systems of each respectively. He could find rest in neither. "Nature confounds the Pyrrhonist," he said, "and reason the Dogmatist." There is a truth both for the reason and faith, but it lies not in demonstration. It is within us, yet above us—the revelation of the Divine to the human soul. This truth is found in Christianity, and in it alone.

Such a man, also, was Justin, in the second century. He had gone abroad in search of wisdom; he had travelled to Egypt, and Greece, and Rome; he had sought instruction in every philosophical school; he had tried Stoics, and Pythagoreans, and Platonists; he had discussed with Jews at Ephesus, and gazed with amazement on the seat of the oracular Sibyl at Cumæ. And as the result of all his wanderings and experiences, he tells us that he found in Christianity "the only sound and useful philosophy." What other systems professed to give, he alone found realised in the gospel. Such have been many men in every age, who have wandered forth in search of the truth—earnest and patient seekers—and at length only found it at the foot of the cross.

Is there any other religion that can boast of such triumphs as Christianity? Is there any other at whose altar have been laid so many offerings, not merely of enthusiasm and of simple faith, but of exercised thoughtfulness and of earnest reason? Is there any one has ever entered, as it has done, into all the depths of the soul? Is there any other religion whatever can claim man as *the child of reason;* and just because he has reason, call upon him in the light of day to examine and prove that it offers him all he needs? This is its peculiar distinction.

"The gospel," says one,* who had learned much from Pascal, "unites itself intimately with all that is most profound and ineradicable in our nature. It fills in it a void—it clears from it darkness—it binds into harmony the broken elements, and creates unity. It makes itself not only to be believed, but felt; and when the soul has thoroughly appropriated it, it blends indistinguishably with all the primitive beliefs, and the natural light (or reason) which every man brings into the world."

Again, the same author urges the correspondence between the soul and the gospel in a beautiful passage:—"You remember the custom of ancient hospitality: before parting with a stranger, the father of the family, breaking a piece of clay on which certain characters were impressed, gave one half to the stranger, and kept the other himself. Years after, these two fragments brought together and rejoined, acknowledged each other—so to speak,—formed a bond of recognition between those presenting them; and in attesting old relations, became at the same time the basis of new. So in the book of our soul does the Divine revelation unite itself to the old traces there. The soul does not discover, but recognises the truth. It infers that a reunion (*rencontre*)—impossible to chance, impossible to calculation—can only be the work

* Vinet.

and secret of God; and it is then really that we believe, when the gospel has for us passed from the rank of an external to the rank of an *internal* truth, and, if I might say so, of an instinct —when, in short, it has become part and parcel of our consciousness."

"This internal evidence, of course, is in its very nature dependent upon an honest, docile, and (if we may say so without incurring the charge of arguing in a circle) believing spirit. A man who has lost the capacity of faith through self-will, or pride of intellect, or any other cause—of course there can be no such witness of the Spirit to him. He has eyes, but he sees not, and ears, but he hears not. If a man is not in search of truth, he cannot find it. "There is light enough for those who are willing, but darkness enough for those who are of an opposite disposition," says Pascal. It is no answer, therefore, to our argument to say that there are many who have no such experience of Christianity. It may be so; but have such any spiritual experience? Have they had their hearts stirred in them to know good and evil? Have they longed after God, and sought to know Him, and to find their happiness in knowing Him? If they have not—then they are out of court in the present case. A spiritual faith can only be known to those whose spiritual

susceptibilities are awake and in quest of the truth. If they have—then so far their case must stand in bar of our conclusion. We would not say that there are not such cases. We would not say that there may not be men of deep sincerity, and even of spiritual earnestness, who cannot find rest in Christianity in such a time as ours. We have no right to say such a thing. But we have right to say that such cases are rare, and are at the best of partial importance. They must be taken into account in forming our judgment; but they are not entitled to set aside the positive evidence with which they seem to conflict. It must be always difficult to estimate such cases, and understand their true importance.

The conclusion remains, that the awakened spiritual intelligence of man, in its highest and most developed forms, continues to find, as it has found in past ages, its truest satisfaction in the gospel. It finds here a revelation of God, and a revelation of itself such as it finds nowhere else—a witness of Perfection above coming down to meet imperfection on earth, and to raise it to its own blessed union and strength. It finds here a power to quicken and enlighten, to regenerate and sanctify—a power which brings the alienated soul back to God, and heals its anxieties, and kindles its torpor, and, from the darkness of sin, raises it to the

light of heaven. It is impossible that a religion which thus leads to God should not come from Him—that our spiritual being should be quickened into life and righteousness by a falsehood. "Suppose, after all, that you are told that this religion is false; but meanwhile it has restored in you the image of God, re-established your original connexion with that great Being, and put you in a condition to enjoy the bliss of heaven; by means of it you have become such that it is impossible God should not recognise you as His child, and own you at the last, and make you partaker of His glory. You are made fit for paradise, nay, paradise has begun in you here—for *you live*. This religion has done for you what all religions propose, but what no other has realised. Nevertheless, by this supposition, it is false—what more could it do if it were true? Nay, do you not rather see that this is a splendid proof of its truth? Do you not see that a religion which thus leads to God must come from God?" It has the witness in itself—"the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, and which testifieth of the Son."

IX.

WHAT TO BELIEVE.

IT is necessary not only to be able to render a reason for the faith that is in us, but, moreover, clearly to understand the objects presented to our faith in Christianity. The two states of mind are intimately connected. No one is in a position to appreciate the "evidences" of Christianity who does not understand what Christianity clearly is, (and there are some who argue on the subject in our day do not really understand this;) and no one can be said to understand Christianity as a subject of thought, who does not know something of its evidences.

The very extent to which Christianity has been made a subject of thought and argument has a tendency to obscure its meaning to the young inquirer. It has been so elaborately systematised, and its various articles so minutely controverted, that it is difficult, amid the mass of speculation and discussion with which it has been invested, to discern its simple meaning. And yet, undoubtedly, its true meaning is very simple, and capable of being apprehended, quite irrespective of the controversies which have traversed and complicated it. We have only to transport ourselves in imagination to the apostolic age, before any of these controversies had arisen—before the ages of dogma had yet come—in order to feel how possible it must be to understand Christianity fully, without plunging into the perilous war of words that has long raged around it. Do not all feel who have most studied it, that this is especially what they have to do—to read its simple meaning in the crossed page of its history—to rise above its watchwords, as they reach us across the ages, bearing many confusing sounds, to the living heart of the cause which they symbolised and were meant to defend—instead of losing the reality in the words, and becoming enslaved to names which may have long lost their original strength and truthfulness?

Beyond all question the objects presented to

our faith in the gospel—what we are to believe—are not primarily any set of propositions or number of articles. Such propositions or articles may be of the highest utility; they may serve admirably to express, in an expository form or outline, our faith; but, primarily, they are not matters of faith. The primary object of Christian faith, as of all faith, is *a Person*. Trust *in me* can only be created by character or claims in *another*. I may assent to a proposition, but I do not properly believe it till the element of personality with which it is connected, or which it represents, comes into play. Faith, like love, is the appropriate exchange of one soul and spirit with another, or with Him who is the Father of spirits, in whose hand is the soul of every living thing; and the word is emptied of its best meaning when (especially in religion) it is used in any lower sense.

The great and comprehending object of Christian faith is Christ. As St Paul said to the Philippian jailer, when, pressed with his sudden burden of offence and danger, he cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." In Jesus Christ is summed up all that we have to believe—the revelation of the Father—the redeeming sacrifice of the Son—the sanctifying of the Spirit, which proceedeth from the Father, and testifieth of the Son. In Him, and in Him

alone, we truly see our sin and misery—our help and salvation—our death and our life—our selfish unrighteousness, and the "righteousness which is of God by faith of Him."

I.—The Revelation of the Father.

In believing in Jesus Christ we believe on the Father, revealed in and by Him. He came "to bear witness of the Father," to reveal the eternal government of the universe in a holy and loving Will—"who made the world and all things therein"—who is "God over all, blessed for ever." This was what men had failed to find out in all their religious searches, in all their philosophic inquiries. The Supreme was conceived of as a great power of fate, or as an arbitrary and capricious personality, or series of personalities. Men had generalised the aspects of nature, and beheld Deity now in the soft sunshine and gentle spring-time, and now in the devastating forms of heat and cold, of thunder and storm. A creative, formative principle seemed everywhere striving with a destructive principle—a power of light with a power of darkness—a Baal-Adonis with a Baal-Moloch—an Osiris with a Typhon—an Ormuzd with an Ahriman—Olympus with Hades. This dualism appears in all nature-religions; the reflection of the brightness and gloom of nature—the joy and

sorrow of life. It crops out alike in the torpid Pantheism of the East, and in the active and changing Polytheism of the West. Philosophy, even when it seemed to penetrate to a unity of substance and being beneath the multiplicity of form and phenomena—as in Platonism—was never entirely liberated from the same bond of dualism. As Destiny was the dark background of all the joyous activity of Olympus, so Necessity was the encompassing barrier of even the Platonic Deity. Creation, in a free Theistic sense, was unknown. It was "God persuading Necessity to become stable, harmonious, and fashioned according to beauty," which was the highest conception of Greek thought in this direction.

If there were no other proof of our Lord's divine mission, this, we think, were one—that the son of a Galilean carpenter taught a higher doctrine of God than all previous religion and philosophy had done; that He unveiled the Supreme as an unconditionally free, and loving, and holy Intelligence; as a Being infinitely exalted, and apart from all evil—"higher than the very heavens"—"dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see"—and yet a Being "not far from any one of us," "who numbereth the very hairs of our head," and "suffereth not a sparrow to fall to the ground without His permission."

If any one doubts what an advance this was on all previous teaching, he has only to study the Gnostic systems of the first Christian ages, and see what difficulty the thought of the time had in seizing the Christian idea of God even after it was promulgated. These systems, one and all of them, are nothing else than attempts of speculation to reduce the Theistic idea to the old dualistic bonds. A God infinitely above man—absolute in power, goodness, and truth, and yet near to man—in Christ "very man"—supreme, and yet "our Father"—light, and yet love—governing the world with personal solicitude for His creatures, yet unmoved by their passions, untouched by the darkness in their hearts;—this was beyond the speculative intellect then, as it has been beyond the same intellect always when divorced from spiritual insight and the light of faith, which can alone pierce the darkness of time.

This revelation of God as the absolute One and yet a living Personality near to all, was only fully made known in Christ. It appears, indeed, in the Old-Testament writings; the very language we have used in characterising it shews this; yet it was only in Christ it became clear and perfect. The Jewish mind clung, according to its narrow instincts, with a peculiar tenacity to the narrower characteristics of the Divine character revealed to it, the tutelary attributes by

which He was signalised as the God of the Jews —their national Deity—rather than the broader attributes which revealed Him as the God of humanity, the "Father of the Spirits of all flesh." The higher prophetic minds among the Hebrews saw onward to the full radiance of this revelation, and "were glad;" but it never became a living faith to the common Jewish mind. It never planted itself as a living faith in man till it was seen incarnated in Christ; and we beheld "His glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

This revelation of the Father is a primary object of Christian faith. Or rather, according to what we have said, the Father revealed in Christ is such an object. To believe in God as absolutely true and good, as holy and loving, as "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," and yet—should we not rather say, and *therefore*—of infinite compassion towards the sinner,—this is the spring of all genuine religion, as the want of faith in God is the spring of all false religion. It is wonderful how many miss this spring, "this living fountain, and hew out unto themselves broken cisterns, that can hold no water." It would seem the hardest thing of all for many to trust in God—to realise for themselves that God loves them, and seeks their good; that for this end Christ came into the world to shew the

love and the holiness of the Father; not as two things in conflict, but as one blessed Will that would save us from our sins. As St John has taught in that marvellous text, the meaning of which we can never exhaust—"*God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"

II.—The Redeeming Sacrifice of the Son.

This was the redeeming sacrifice of the Son, that the Father gave Him for us. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Such is the simple teaching of Scripture, in which we may find strength and peace, although we are no theologians, and may be unable to theorise regarding the means and the extent of the atonement.

The great facts brought before us in such statements, and many others, of Scripture, are the loving will of the Father, and the voluntary sacrifice of the Son in our behalf; the latter as the free outgoing or expression of the former. Every mode of thought or manner of speech which tends to dissever these two facts, and

to introduce any element of conflict into the Divine mind regarding human redemption, is carefully to be guarded against. It is perfectly true, no doubt, and very important truth, that the holiness and justice of God must hate and repel our sins. God is revealed as a Sovereign and Lawgiver, as well as a Father; and the sinner as transgressor of Divine law, must lie under its penalty. Those who push out of sight the elements of law and justice, and leave only those of love and pity, detract from the full revelation of the character of God, as they wilfully ignore many facts of life. Everywhere around us and in us there are traces of retributive operation—of laws violated, and punishment swiftly following the violation. There are instincts of genuine alarm and danger in us, which tremble before the Divine righteousness. In one sense, therefore, it is right to say that the justice of God claims our punishment, while the love of God claims our salvation; but these two outgoings of the Divine will towards us are only apparently, and not really in conflict. They do not mean different things; they mean the very same thing. The Divine justice claims the punishment of our sins to the end that we may be saved from them; the Divine love claims our salvation for no other end. Salvation is always and everywhere, in its true meaning, *rescue from sin.* The Lord gave Himself for us that

He "might redeem us from all our iniquities, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works."

The redeeming sacrifice of Christ, therefore, is at once the expression of the Father's love, and an oblation to satisfy Divine justice. It is both, for the very same reason that Christ was the manifestation of the Father upon earth, to do the Father's will. "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God," is the memorial expression of the atonement. The will of the Father in Christ was love to the sinner, and at the same time hatred of the sinner's sin, or holiness. The realisation of the Divine love in the holy life, healing miracles, and bitter death of Christ, was also the satisfaction of the Divine holiness—the magnifying of the law, and making it honourable. The very doing of the Father's loving will was the propitiation of His offended justice. He looked on Christ, and saw in Him the perfect accomplishment of His thought towards man. The voice from heaven was heard to say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

This sacrifice of Christ in His life and in His death is the great object of Christian faith. "He gave himself for us—the Just for the unjust—that He might bring us unto God." Look clearly and practically at this thought, and see if you do not realise its meaning as living and true for

you. Do you not feel that there is something in you that answers to it?—nay, that there is something in you that demands it? If your spiritual life has been awakened, and you have come to own yourself a creature of God, do you not feel, at the same time, how difficult it is for you to live near to God and to do His will? Do you not feel *that His will to you* must be a will of condemnation and of punishment, if you are to stand before Him and court His judgment on yourself? The deepest spiritual natures that the world has ever known have felt this—St Paul, Augustine, Luther, Pascal. They all felt that they had no hope in themselves before God. "Their own heart condemned them." "O wretched man that I am!" exclaimed St Paul; "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "Oh, my sins, my sins!" cried Luther. "It is in vain that I promise to God. Sin is always too strong for me."

Is this or is it not a real moral experience? one under which every soul, really quickened to life—really aroused to earnest spiritual thoughtfulness—passes? It is surely a cruel, as well as a useless mockery, to pass by such experiences, and give them no response, while yet they cry from every full heart, to which the sense of God has come in power and awe. Are they to be thought only strange voices crying in the wilderness, while the progress of religious truth

sweeps past them? No. These *suspiria de profundis* are the most genuine utterances of religious truth. They are the living voice of God in the soul, and no mere cry of exaggerated despair.

And if this be so, then—if it be a true feeling in us that we cannot in ourselves stand before God, that we cannot in ourselves render Him obedience—who shall say that our rest in Christ, and our hope in Him, contradict any instincts of our spirit? Is it not Help we need—some one to unveil to us the face of God, and bring Him near to us, and us to Him? Is not mediation the necessary correlate of alienation? If the sinner cannot reach God—if his sins hold him back—is it not some one to open up the way to him, "new and living," and to bear his sins, that he wants? This question of mediation and its necessity, is one which it is in vain for any mere esoteric and refining theology to hope to settle, by round assertions as to mediation being in contradiction to our moral instincts. Where is the evidence of this? "Our moral instincts," we presume, are the higher instincts of our common humanity, which connect us with duty and with God. They cannot be the refinements of a few philosophic natures, who have gradually pared down their spiritual consciousness, till it has lost all its rougher vitality. The common heart seems nowhere to find any contradiction in the idea of mediation. It is above

all the religious idea to which it everywhere clings. If there be one thing more than another for which the soul cries in its moments of religious distress and moral temptation, it is *help*—help not in ourselves, but in another "able to save even to the uttermost." It is only when this higher power is owned by us, lifting us out of our sins, that we really rise above them, and feel that their bondage falls away from us, and that not merely the will, but the capacity to do good is present with us.

It is true that this idea of mediation, so dear to the human heart, is extremely liable to corruption. There is a constant tendency in popular religion, so to speak, to secularise it—to degrade it from the sphere of the Divine to the sphere ofthe human, and even of the material. Man feels so deeply the need of help, that he is apt to cling to any object to which his religious affections may point when these are greatly agitated. The elaborate mediatory system of the Roman Catholic Church has its origin in this deep-seated tendency, and, no less indeed, some forms of Protestant faith. Whatever dissevers, even in thought, Christ from God, and leaves the mind to rest on the sacrifice of Christ, as anything apart from the will of God, and a power moving it from without, rather than *its own expression and power of love for our good*, is so far of the very same character as the grosser Roman Catholic error that Protestantism rejects.

Nothing must be allowed to hide the heart immediately from God himself. It is God that saves us in Christ, and not Christ that saves us out of God. The Mediator whom the religious instinct demands, and whom Christianity reveals, is—Emmanuel, God with us. There is nothing can come near to us with any right effect as a thought of help in our hours of need save God himself—God in Christ revealed in the gospel, as loving us, and seeking our good. We have only to preserve clearly the unity of the will of God and of Christ in redemption, the fact that Christ IS GOD "manifest in the flesh," in order to rid the idea of mediation of all possible conflict with our spiritual consciousness, on the one hand, and of all materialising corruption, on the other hand. Everything that tends to disturb our clear perception of this unity—everything that breaks down the full idea of the Incarnation, and suggests the thought of any extraneous power coming between us and God—serves at once to degrade and contradict our highest sense of religion. The soul can only find rest in God; it can only be really helped by Him. It has been so helped. God has revealed Himself in Christ as our Saviour. This is the great truth of the Gospel, and, more than anything else, the great truth which man ever needs.

Fix your hearts on this truth—that God is your Saviour. It needs no special theological

knowledge to comprehend it; and it remains substantially unaffected by many perplexities of dogmatic discussion. You need salvation. If you are honest and earnest, you will feel that there is a reality of evil in your lives from which you need to be delivered, and a reality of good in your imagination to which you cannot attain. God sent His Son into the world not merely to shew you by contrast the hatefulness of this evil and the beauty of this good. This indeed would have been but a small matter—to quicken and educate our moral sense, while we were left with an unrelieved sense of guilt and a weakened and perverted will: not so;—but God sent His Son into the world to take away our sins. The burden of moral offence which our conscience owns He took upon Himself—He was "bruised for our iniquity." He so made Himself one with us in every feeling of humanity, as to realise what our sins were, and to atone for them before the Father; and having "thus *made peace*," and not merely announced truth, He is able to save all that come unto Him. The conscience finds peace in the assurance of atonement; the will finds strength in the knowledge of a living Help. In Him and through Him we are brought near to God in a full assurance of faith that God loves us, notwithstanding the offence of all our sins, and has reconciled us unto Himself by His cross. In Him we have redemption, even the forgive-

ness of our sins, according to the riches of His grace. And nothing short of this—nothing short of a new relation—of a true reconciliation established between God and the sinner—seems to give a firm foundation to the religious life, and a genuine and growing vigour to it.

"Will any faith that is short of this faith," asks one who has written thoughtfully of this and other kindred Christian topics,* "satisfy the deepest needs and cravings of your souls? You may struggle against it with your understanding, though I think very needlessly; for it seems to me to approve itself to the reason and the conscience quite as much as to demand acceptance of our faith; but you will crave it with your inmost spirit. There are times when perhaps nothing short of this will save you from a hopeless despair. Let me imagine, for example, one who, with many capacities for a nobler and purer life, and many calls thereunto, has yet suffered himself to be entangled in youthful lusts—has stained himself with these; and then, after a while, awakens, or rather is awakened by the good Spirit of God, to ask himself, What have I done? How fares it with him at the retrospect then, when he, not wholly laid waste in spirit, is made to possess (O fearful possession!) the sins of his youth? Like a stricken deer, though none but himself may be conscious of his wound, he

* Dean Trench.

wanders away from his fellows; or if with them, he is alone among them; for he is brooding still and ever on the awful mystery of evil which he now too surely knows. And now, too, all purity, the fearful innocence of children, the holy love of sister and of mother, and the love which he had once dreamed of as better even than these, with all that is supremely fair in nature or in art, comes to him with a shock of pain, is fraught with an infinite sadness; for it wakens up in him, by contrast, a livelier sense of what he is, and what, as it seems, he must for ever be; it reminds him of a paradise for ever lost, the angel of God's anger guarding with a fiery sword its entrance against him. He tries by a thousand devices to still, or at least to deaden the undying pain of his spirit. What is this word *sin* that it should torment him so? He will tear away the conscience of it, this poisonous shirt of Nessus eating into his soul, which in a heedless moment he has put on. But no; he can tear away his own flesh, but he cannot tear away that. Go where he may, he still carries with him the barbed shaft which has pierced him—*hæret lateri letalis arundo.* The arrow which drinks up his spirit, there is no sovereign dittany which will cause it to drop from his side—none, that is, which grows on earth; but there is which grows in heaven, and in the Church of Christ, the heavenly enclosure there. And you, too, may find your

peace, you will find it, when you learn to look by faith on Him, 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' You will carry, it may be, the scars of those wounds which you have inflicted upon yourself to your grave; but the wounds themselves He can heal them, and heal them altogether. He can give you back the years which the cankerworm has eaten, the peace which your sin had chased away, and, as it seemed to you, for ever. He can do so, and will. 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.' This will then be your prayer, and this your prayer will be fulfilled. The blood of sprinkling will purge you, and you will feel yourself clean. Your sin will no longer be yourself; you will be able to look at it as separated from you, as laid upon another; upon One so strong, that He did but for a moment stagger under the weight of a world's sin, and then so bore, that bearing, He has borne it away for ever."

III.—The Grace of the Holy Spirit.

The sanctifying of the Holy Spirit of God stands as a truth in immediate connexion with the redeeming sacrifice of the Son of God. Pentecost followed Calvary. The outpouring of the Spirit came through the shedding of the blood upon the cross. And the two truths are

not only united objectively, but in our inward consciousness. As our spiritual alienation points to the one, our moral helplessness points to the other. It is the same need of help, only in different aspects, that demands atonement, and demands the grace of sanctifying. And here, too, it is important to seize clearly and keep in view the unity of the Divine will. This will is in all respects good to us—in all respects powerful to bless us; and as the sacrifice of Christ is the expression of its love and favour for us in one direction—so is the agency of the Holy Spirit the expression of its love and favour for us in a farther and completing direction. Redeemed by the sacrifice of the Son, brought back from our alienation and wretched guiltiness into love and favour, we are not merely placed, as it were, on a new footing before God, but we are quickened with a new life; we are made partakers of His Spirit. We enter not only into new relations with Him, but we become new creatures. The change that is wrought in us is always a moral, and in no sense merely a formal change. It is a change from death to life, from selfishness to self-sacrifice, from neglect or worldliness, or at least indifference, to an earnest and solemn communion with God. The tendencies of our being point upwards, and no longer downwards. "We are created anew unto all good works."

The Divine Spirit is the constant and only agent of this great change in us, and it is absolutely necessary that we apprehend and believe in His influence. "In us, that is, in our flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." No life, no righteousness can subsist apart from God. And if at any time we fall away from our consciousness of Divine influence, and still more if we lose our faith in it, we make shipwreck of a good conscience, and become tempted of our lusts. We must look not away from ourselves, but beyond ourselves, higher than ourselves—to Him "who performeth all things for us," and who can alone work in us the works of faith and of holiness with power. When we think of our pressing moral necessities, the weakness, and fears, and darkness that so often beset us, and the helpless wavering of our will when the stain of temptation falls upon us, it might seem that of all things we would be free to look beyond ourselves to the Holy Spirit of God, and to make ourselves strong in Him and "in the power of His might;" but self-will and self-reliance often drive out faith and humility from our hearts. It is as these live, however, and in their life cling to God and to the Spirit of God, which He giveth to every one that asketh Him, that we alone grow strong to do the will of God, and to walk in a way well-pleasing unto Him.

The Three Aspects of Christian truth which we have now presented form the main substance of Christian faith, practically considered. There are many important points of faith besides, but these are, more than anything else, the essential substance upon which it lives. They are all immediately connected with Christ himself. In believing on Christ rightly, we believe in them all. It is only in the life, miracles, and doctrines of Christ that the character of God is unveiled; it is only through the death of Christ and His ascension into heaven that the full reality of the Spirit's influence is made known. The love of God, the sacrifice of Christ, the love and power of the Spirit, were no doubt all present to the mind of St Paul when he said to the Philippian jailer, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

The case of the Philippian jailer was not one for minute theological instruction. He did not want to have a system of thought set before him. He wanted a living truth on which he could rest—a living Saviour to whom he could appeal. And the case of every one of us is practically of the same character. We may not be plunged into any sudden crisis of spiritual torture such as he was; we may not be overcome by a fear which makes us cry out, whether we will or not; but we are equally creatures of

the same spiritual necessities with him, and our only strength is where his lay. We can only be saved from our sins, and the terror which they seldom fail to bring with them, as he was—we must "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Is it a hard thing to trust in God, and in Christ, and in the Spirit of God and of Christ? Yes, it is a hard thing, if we are either sunk in self-gratification or self-delusion, in the pride of pleasure or the pride of intellect. If we have given up our hearts to vanities, and remember not that "for all these things God will call us into judgment"—or if we have given up our souls to abstraction, and remember not that life is more solemn than our theories of it, and death more swift than our solutions of them,—then it is hard to cherish a trust of which we do not feel the need, for which we have left no room. But if we are practically earnest about life and death, if our hearts are moved to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," to look beyond the present and to prepare for the future, then the faith of Christ will be found to meet our necessities and aspirations more than anything else. The thought of God's unfailing love, and of Christ's atoning death, and of the Holy Spirit's constant presence and power, will fit into the course of our life, and the reality of Divine help into which they combine will more nearly touch us than all reality besides.

X.

WHAT TO AIM AT.

THE very conception of moral life implies life under a rule, and directed towards an end. It implies, in short, an ideal element. It is higher in thought and aim than it ever is in practice and fact.

The presence of this ideal element distinguishes the human from the mere animal life. The latter is a constant outgoing, an incessant activity, and nothing more. It has no interior drama, no reflective pauses. The senses are its only media and ministers; impressions are being constantly conveyed through them, and movement is constantly given off as the result; and

this is all. It would be shocking to think that there was anything more, considering how we use animal life—how recklessly we squander it for our pleasure or our profit.

It is the distinction of moral life that it is capable of "looking before and after," that it can reflectively realise its own character and purposes; and it is supposed to rise the higher, and become the nobler, the more completely it is governed by law, and the more actively it fulfils it. Many, it must be confessed, but feebly own this. Instinct and not principle, habit and not reflection, guide and control their existence, which, in its monotonous or exciting round of sensations, can scarcely claim to be higher than that of the lower animals. Nay, it may fall lower, from the mere circumstance that it is in its essence superior, and that it cannot, therefore, be absorbed in a mere sensational activity, without losing itself and becoming corrupted. We never feel this in regard to the lower animals. The constant play and free indulgence of sensations in which their life consists, suggest only a conformity with their nature; and all conformity with nature is beautiful. It is the feeling that a mere sensational existence is not in harmony with the true nature of man, that he has a higher being, which is violated when it does not receive exercise and scope, that makes us look upon such an existence as unworthy of

man, and even degrading to him. In point of fact, it always is degrading to him. For just because he is essentially a higher being, he cannot preserve his purity, his healthfulness, (as the lower animals do,) in a mere life of sensation.

Every ethical theory, therefore, has sought to raise man above sense, and inspire him with the idea of law, however vaguely and imperfectly, in many cases. Even Epicureanism, which, in popular language, has become identified with mere sensual gratification, and a possible philosophy thereof, did not profess to regard man as a mere animal, without intellectual or moral aspirations. It set before him, indeed, pleasure as the highest good, but pleasure according to his nature, not in disregard or contempt of it. Otherwise the pleasure could not possibly be his highest good, and a philosophy which in its very conception contradicted itself *would stand in no need of refutation*. We may find much to disapprove of in Epicureanism, but we shall not find such silliness and contradictoriness in any great system of thought which has swayed the minds of men.

Stoicism announced the idea of law as its great principle. It set before its disciples a lofty but stern and barren ideal. The law of which it conceived was an "immanent necessity of reason," an unchanging impersonal order governing the universe. To this all must submit, and find

peace in submission. "The wise man," says Marcus Aurelius, "calmly looks on the game, and surrenders with cheerfulness his individual existence to the claims of the whole, to which every individual as a part ought to be subservient." This was, beyond doubt, a brave and heroic doctrine for heroic creatures. In many noble minds in the old Roman world it was a spring of genuine greatness; but a moral ideal which could only appeal to the strength of man's will, and which in its very conception excluded every element of personal sympathy, was totally unfitted for the race as a whole. It started from a defective moral basis, and could only reach, even in the best, a defective moral standard.

It is the boast of Christianity that it sets before man the only perfect ideal of life; an ideal which at once bases itself on a true interpretation of his nature, and which works itself out by a living Divine agency, alone fitted effectually to move and educate him. It enunciates even more faithfully than Stoicism the idea of law; but then it apprehends and represents this law, not as a dead impersonal necessity, but as a living and loving Will in converse with our feeble wills, healing and helping their infirmities. It merges *law*, in short, in the holy and blessed Will of Christ; and the ideal which it paints is neither a stern moralism, which is always say-

ing to itself, "Courage, courage! whatever is, is right;" nor a poetic self-culture, which aims at the fitting and joyous development of every natural faculty; but a life in God, a life in communion with the Highest; humble, and pure, and self-denying, yet strong, cheerful, and heroic. It starts, altogether unlike Stoicism, from the recognition of human weakness, but instead of holding out any soft palliations for this weakness, it only reveals it—to cure it; and from the Divine strengthening of the "inner man," it builds up the outer life into compact seemliness and virtue.

"All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye."

This is no inadequate expression of the Christian ideal. "For our conversation is in heaven," says St Paul, "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus." To have our lives fixed in God and in Christ—to preserve a consciousness of an unseen and higher life ever encompassing ours, and being near to us at once as a presence of holiness and of help; this is the aim of the Christian. A true and noble life on earth he believes can alone spring from communion with heaven. It can alone be maintained and grow up into the "measure of the stature" of a perfect life from an increase of this communion. All that is good on earth is merely a reflection of the good that is above. "If there

be any virtue, and if there be any praise," God is the source of them, and Christ the pattern of them. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report;" these are prescribed in Christ as our example. And the Spirit takes of the things of Christ and imparts them to us. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

This Divine education, after the holy Example of our Lord, is the Christian life. The ideal is to be like unto Him who lived in constant communion with the Father—"who did no sin"—"who went about continually doing good." How lofty, and yet how attractive, an ideal! higher than any mere dream of inflexible law, yet condescending to our weakness, in the loving sympathy and help which it extends to us. This element of character makes every difference. It is not the mere voice of command that we hear—not the mere claim of obedience that is exacted from us; but the voice is that of a friend and "elder Brother"—of One who "is not untouched with the feeling of our infirmities, but who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The claim is the claim of a Love which is ready to help us, which is

constantly helping us, and drawing us within the secret folds of its own Divine communion.

Anything lower than this life of communion with God in Christ, is repudiated by the Christian ideal as an imperfect and sinful life. It may possess much that the world calls virtue—it may be honest, industrious, and self-sacrificing—it may even shew a strength and consistent manliness that some manifestations of the Christian life are found to fail in; but, nevertheless, it is of an inferior quality. It not merely comes short of, but it does not really touch the Christian ideal; for it is impossible to separate the life of man from God without fatal injury to that life. If God is, and if we are His creatures, our being cannot grow into any healthy or perfect form while we remain divorced in spirit and love from Him. Certain elements of character may flourish in us, but certain other, and still more important elements, must be wanting. The rougher excellences of worldly virtue may be found, but not the deeper and gentler traits of pious affection. When the soul has not turned into the light of Divine love, and known to rest there amid the confusion and darkness of the present, there cannot be the fulness of sympathetic intelligence, and the strength and patience of hope, out of which the highest character grows. There may be much to admire, or respect, or even to love, but there cannot be

the "beauty of holiness," nor the excellence of charity. These only live and flourish in the soul which has been awakened to a consciousness of Divine communion, and which, even in moments when it may fall below this communion, and forget its kindred with heaven, is yet sustained by a living love, binding it with a quiet embrace. Every other life, however admirable or lovely for a time, will sink and grow dull when the flush of youth is gone, and the canker of sorrow begins to prey on its early promise.

This is, perhaps, more than anything, the test of the Christian ideal, in comparison with all other ideals of life. As time wears on, it grows in distinctness, and brightens into a lovelier hue, while the ideals of mere culture or worldly ambition grow dim and vanish. The progress of years, more than anything, brings out radical differences of character. In youth all are much alike. The most beautiful youth certainly may not appear the most religious—the captivation of gay spirits, and of healthful development, may carry off the palm; but afterwards, when there is a greater drain upon the springs of life, and circumstances bring out more thoroughly all that is in us, the attractions of the outward cease, and the true character shines forth. Then the life which has sought its strength in secret converse with the Highest, bears fruit in chas-

tened affections and enduring virtues. It matures into beauty and fruitfulness under the very same process by which the merely natural life is impaired and worn out. As the vivid brightness and genial happiness which give to the latter its youthful bloom fade away, there comes forth in the former a tempered strength of faith, and hope, and charity, which shall never fade, which has in it an incorruptible seed, springing up into everlasting life. It is like the contrast of the wine in the first miracle which our Lord did at Cana of Galilee. Worldly ideals set before us the best wine first, and "afterwards, when men have well drunk, then that which is worse;" but in the Christian ideal, "the best wine is ever kept until now!" The last is always the best. The character ripens as it is proved, until at length it passes into the perfect form of that life above, which is at once its consummation and its source.

There is nothing more important for young men than to keep steadily before them the Christian ideal of life. Nothing lower should satisfy them. Nothing less will bless them. This may seem a hard saying. When we think of what life for the most part is, and what the life of the young too often is, it may appear as a day-dream to set forth this ideal as its aim and end—to have the "life hid with Christ

in God." Surely this is an awful and distant reality for us all now, here in this world of daily toil, and trivial pleasures, of selfish business, and sometimes as selfish religion. It may have done for St Paul to aspire to such a life—he who "counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ"—who burned to "fill up in his body what remained of the sufferings of Christ"—who was crucified to the world, and "dead unto sin." It was a present, a common truth to him that his "conversation was in heaven." But shall we use such language? it has been asked in our time, as the feeling of reality has grown, and men have shrunk from comparisons that seemed to shame them, and to be far removed from them.

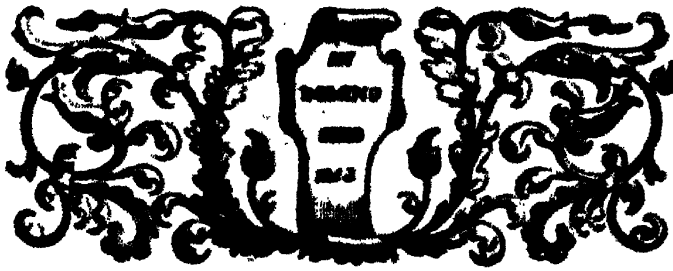
Yes, we are bound to use such language; and still more, to keep in view the ideal which it suggests. The life of faith, and love, and holy converse with God is no mere esoteric blessing. It was not merely designed for St Paul, or the holy men of old. They urged it constantly as the common privilege and good of all Christians; and our wish should be, not to part with the words which express it, but to strive after the realisation of their blessed meaning. It is ideal, no doubt, in its perfection, but it is also real. Nay, it is the only reality worth having. And miserably as we may often come short, we must on no account lose sight of it.

We shall sink into utter worldliness if we do, and the shadows of death shall cover us from the light of heaven.

Let not the Divine ideal, therefore, ever perish from your hearts. Quench it not by the darkness of sinful passion, or the neglect of hardening worldliness. Let it live brightly in your inner being, amid all the cares and sorrows and doubts of time. Whatever may be doubtful, this cannot be so—this image of purity and peace and heaven. Does it not rise all the more vividly against the shadowy background of earth's confusions and miseries? Limit it not by your narrowness; dim it not by your superstition or your unbelief. Far as you may be from it, still lift your eyes toward it. And although, like the weary traveller amid Alpine heights, who sees before him the glory of the morning light, and aims to stand within its moving splendours, which vanish as he approaches, you may find it pass from the fulness of your possession here, and the unfulfilled vision may haunt your dying dreams, yet fix steadily your heart upon it, for it is yours, although not now and near—the sure mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

PART II.

BUSINESS.



I.

WHAT TO DO.

THE Christian ideal of life has seemed to many so far removed from the world and its ways, that they have been driven to seek after its attainment in an entire abstraction from the world's business and pleasures. They have sought to flee from evil, and not to fight with it. But we rightly judge that this is at once inconsistent with Christian truth and futile as a moral aim. Our faith is "the victory that overcometh the world," and not the beaten foe that flies from it. The world is not merely the mass of evil and misery that is around us, but especially the evil that holds our own hearts—the enemy of

spiritual life and strength and peace that we carry with us wherever we go, and which is indeed often nearer to us in quiet solitude than in the stirring mart.

Moreover, as the world is constituted, it is no question of choice, but of obvious necessity, that most men spend their lives in its business and employments. Every one has his work to do. The whole fabric of our modern civilisation is nothing else than the development of the industrial principle which is implanted in our constitution, and divinely sanctified in this very fact. The earth was given to man to dress and keep it. He was appointed to find in work the appropriate activity and happiness of his being. And there is no law more clear in principle, more sure in result, than that which affixes to social industry, prosperity and blessing. The wealth of nations is its fruit, the glory of civilisation its crown.

To the young who stand, as it were, on the threshold of the great workhouse of the world, preparing to take their part in it, it becomes a serious and urgent consideration what part they are to take in it. After the formation of Christian principles, the choice of a profession is the most serious consideration that can engage their attention.

Perhaps the first step in the consideration is to realise the necessity of having definite work

to do, and the real worth, and, if we may say so, sacredness of all honest work. There are few men who escape the necessity of adopting some calling or profession; and there are fewer still who, if they rightly understood their own interest and happiness, would ever think of such an escape. For, according to that law of work of which we have already spoken, life finds its most enjoyable action in regular alternations of employment and leisure. Without employment it becomes a tedium, and men are forced to *make work* for themselves. They turn their very pleasures into toil, and undertake, from the mere want of something to do, the most laborious and exhausting pastimes. To any healthy nature, idleness is an intolerable burden; and its enforced endurance a more painful penance than the hardest labours.

It is not easy, however, for the young to realise this. "Play" has been such a charm to their schoolboy fancy, that they sometimes dream that they would like life to be all play. They are apt, at least, to take to regular work with something of a grudge. They have so many delays and difficulties about a profession, that time passes on and they miss their opportunity. There is no more serious calamity can happen to any young man than this; and many a life has been wasted from sheer incapacity of fixing on what to do. The will gets feeble in the

direction of self-denial of any kind, and talents which might have carried their possessor on to social consideration and usefulness, serve merely to illumine an aimless and pitied existence.

Young men who are, so to speak, born to work—to whom life leaves no chance of idleness—are perhaps the most fortunate. They take up the yoke in their youth. They set their faces to duty from the first; and if life should prove a burden, their backs become inured to it, so that they bear the weight more easily than others do pleasures and vanities. In our modern life, this is a largely-increasing class. As the relations of society become more complicated, and its needs more enlarged, refined, and expensive, the duty of work—of every man to his own work—becomes more urgent and universal. There is no room left for the idle. There are certainly no rewards to them. Society expects every man to do his duty; and its revenge is very swift when its claims are neglected or its expectations disappointed.

But it is at least equally important for young men to begin life with an intelligent appreciation of work as a whole, and to free their mind from the prejudices which have so long prevailed on this subject. It is singular how long and to what extent these prejudices have prevailed. Some kinds of employment have been deemed

by traditionary opinion to be honourable, and such as gentlemen may engage in; others have been deemed to be base, and unfit for gentlemen. Why so? It would puzzle any moralist to tell. The profession of a soldier is supposed to be the peculiar profession of a gentleman; that of a tailor is the opprobrium of boys and the ridicule of small wits. Is there not something untrue as well as unworthy in the implied comparison? There is surely no reason why industrial employments, involving a high exercise of intelligence and skill, should not be as honourable as the profession of a soldier; such employments are peculiarly characteristic of civilisation, and rise with it into higher forms of utility; while the mere soldier, even if his need should not decrease—as our Peace-utopians dreamed some years ago—must yet sink into comparative insignificance with the progress of Christian enlightenment and the wider diffusion of good government.

Prejudices of this sort, however, are very invetcrate, and live long in sentiment after they have been defeated in reason. While we are losing sight of the usages of feudal times, its traditions still cling to us—traditions which are the legitimate descendants of the ignorance which led the mailed baron to boast that he had never learned to write—and which made it be deemed inconsistent with the position of a gentleman to

do anything but fight, or hunt, or spend his time in wassail. It is not necessary, certainly, and would not be well for society to unlearn such traditions all at once. They connect age with age, and perhaps lend a softening influence to the vast changes which the modern development of wealth is calling forth; but they are not the less really ignorant; and when prolonged in force, through a time whose social necessities have outlived them, they become purely mischievous.

Such a time is ours. The protective or feudal idea of life is gone. The lord and his retainers—the castle and its dependants—are images of the past. Economical relations are everywhere supplanting the old personal and authoritative relations which used to bind society together. Servants and masters, traders and customers, tenants and landlords, no longer occupy towards each other indefinite attitudes of dependence, on the one hand, and of patronising favour, on the other hand. Each have their own definite position and interests—their fixed commercial relation to the others; and within their own spheres and duties they are almost equally independent.

This may be a bad or a good change. It is a subject of regret to many who look back upon the old state of things with sentiments of emotion as that to which their youth was familiar, and the memory of which pleasantly lingers with them. As life becomes a retrospect rather than

a prospect, it is natural that the mind should cling to the old familiar forms of society, and repel, even with dislike, the revolutions taking place around it. There is, no doubt, a good deal to excite regret in the accessories of the change. With the decline of the instincts of dependence, those of respectful courtesy and obedient charity are apt also to vanish. There is less free, lively, and affectionate intercourse of class with class, where the commercial feeling has displaced the old personal family feeling—an evil which may be seen working, with special confusion, at present in the department of domestic service. But whatever may be the disagreeable results of the change, as we see it proceeding under our eyes, it is, beyond question, an inevitable change, which we ought not therefore to regret, but to understand and make the most of for the good of society as a whole. It is the necessary consequence of the enormous development of industrial life, and the rapidly-accumulating wealth touching all classes of society, which flows from this development. And if society should seem to lose some of its old courtesies in the course of things, we are to remember that the feeling of independence which has sprung up in exchange is a great gain. Society cannot lose in the end from its own progress. A widening field of human activity will be opened up in many directions; industrial

employment of all kinds will rise to an equal value and worth, as the means of securing an honest and honourable livelihood. Men will learn to be ashamed of no work which gives them a solid footing in the struggling mass of social activity around them, and saves them from being a burden to others.

It is the imperative duty of all who recognise the vast social revolution that is going on, if they cannot help to clear the pathway of the worker —male and female—at least to do nothing to obstruct it by the promulgation of obsolete and mischievous notions. Let the revolution silently work itself out. Let young men, and young women too, of whatever grade of life, to whom there may seem no opening in the now recognised channels of professional or domestic activity which have been conventionally associated with their position, make to themselves, as they may be able, an opening in the ranks of commercial or mechanical employment. If society, from its very increase of wealth and refinement, and the expensive habits which necessarily flow from this increase, creates obstacles to an advantageous settlement in life after the old easy manner to many among the young, it certainly ought not by its prejudices to stand in the way of their launching upon the great world of life in their own behalf, and attaining to what industrial independence and prosperity they can.

It is at least a right and wise feeling for the young to cultivate—that there is no form of honest work which is really beneath them. It may or may not be suitable for them. It may or may not be the species of work to which they have any call. But let them not despise it. The grocer is equally honourable with the lawyer, and the tailor with the soldier, as we have already said. It is just as really becoming a gentleman—if we could purge our minds of traditional delusions which will not stand a moment's impartial examination—to serve behind a counter as to sit at a desk, to pursue a handicraft as to indite a law paper or write an article. The only work that is *more honourable*, is work of higher skill and more meritorious excellence. It is the qualities of the workman, and not the name or nature of the work, that is the source of all real honour and respect.

The professions to which life invites the young are of very various kinds; and the question of choice among them, as it is very important, is sometimes also very trying and difficult. Rightly viewed, it ought to be a question simply of capacity. What am I fit for? But it is more easy in many cases to ask this question than to answer it. It will certainly, however, facilitate an answer, to disembarrass the mind of such prejudices as we have been speaking of. The field of choice

is in this manner left comparatively open. Work as such, if it be honest work, is esteemed not for the adventitious associations that may surround it, but because it offers an appropriate exercise for such powers as we possess, and a means of self-support and independence.

There are those to whom the choice of a profession presents comparatively few difficulties. They are gifted with an aptitude for some particular calling, in such a degree that they themselves and their friends discern their bent from early youth, and they grow up with no other desire than to betake themselves to what is acknowledged to be their destiny in the world. Such cases are, perhaps, the happiest of all; but they are far from numerous. A special aptitude is seldom so pronounced in youth. Even where it exists, it lies hid many a time, and unknown even to its possessor, till opportunity calls it forth. There are other cases where the circumstances of the young are such as to mark out for them without deliberation on their part the profession which they are to follow. Family traditions and social advantages may so clearly point their way in life that they never hesitate. They have never been accustomed to look in any other direction, and they take to their lot with a happy pride, or at least a cheerful contentment.

But the great majority of young men are not to be found in either of these envied positions.

They have their way to make in the world; and they are neither so specially gifted, on the one hand, nor so fortunately circumstanced, on the other hand, as to see clearly and without deliberation, the direction in which they should turn, and the fitting work to which they should give themselves.

Many things must be considered by them and for them in such a case which we are not called upon to discuss here—which, indeed, we cannot discuss here. The accidents of position, with which, after all, the balance of their lot may lie, vary so indefinitely that it would be impossible to indicate any clear line of direction for them. But without venturing to do this, it may be useful to fix the thoughts of the young upon certain general features of the various classes of professions that lie before them in the world open for their ambition and attainment.

Professions may be generally classified as intellectual, commercial, and mechanical, excluding those which belong to the public service, such as the army and navy, and the civil offices under Government. These form by themselves a class of professions of great importance. But the aptitudes which they require are, upon the whole, less determined, and therefore less easily characterised, than those which the ordinary professions demand. A merchant or a shoe-

maker, or even a clergyman, may become, should circumstances summon him, a soldier or a diplomatist, but neither the soldier nor diplomatist could so easily assume the function of the merchant, or shoemaker, or clergyman. And for the simple reason that the function of these last is more definite, or professional, and, therefore, involves a more special aptitude, or one more easy of discovery and consideration. Not that, for a moment, we would be supposed to undervalue the inner faculties that go to make the excellent soldier or Government official. Only in the former case, the qualities of honour, bravery, and patriotism, are such as all men ought to possess—they are common attributes of a healthy humanity; and in the latter case, the very same qualities that point to official employment, and would be likely to obtain distinction in it, are such as are equally needed for some of the ordinary professions included in our classification.

Neither must it be supposed, in making this classification, that the names we have used have anything more than a general application warranted by the talk of society, and, therefore, sufficiently intelligible. There are certain callings which society has agreed to consider more intellectual, more of the character of professions, and others which it regards as more peculiarly of a business or commercial character, and others again that are more of the nature of a craft, or

handiwork. In point of fact, all are intellectual in the sense of calling into exercise the intellectual powers; and it may so happen that more mental capacity may be shewn in conducting affairs of business, or in inventing or applying some new mechanical agency, than in the discharge of the duties of the intellectual professions, commonly so called. This does not, however, affect the propriety of the classification. The subject-matter of the callings is nevertheless distinct. Those of the first class deal more largely and directly with the intellectual nature of man; they involve a more special mental training; while those of the other two classes deal more with the outward industrial activities, and are presumed not to require so prolonged or careful an intellectual education.

This obvious distinction serves to mark generally the qualities that are demanded in these respective orders of professions. Whether a man is to be a clergyman, lawyer, (using the word in its largest sense as including the profession of the bar) physician,—or a merchant, an engineer, or an ordinary tradesman, should depend, in a general way at least, on the comparative vivacity and force of his intellectual powers. A youth who has but little intellectual interest, who cares but little or not at all for literary study and the delights of scholastic ambition, is shut out by nature from approach to

the former professions. They are not *his* calling in any high or even useful sense. He may approach them and enter upon them, and a certain worldly success may even await him in them under the favouring gale of circumstances; but according to any real standard of excellence or utility, he has missed his proper course in life. He may have found what he wanted, but others will often have failed to find in him what they were entitled to expect.

Take the case of a clergyman, for example. We do not forget that in this case there are certain qualities of still higher consideration and moment than even the intellectual; but we do not meddle with these here. These qualities may be supposed by some to isolate the function of a clergyman altogether from the ordinary avocations of life; but even such a view would not affect the bearing of our remarks. Practically, the function of the Christian ministry is and will always be one of the main channels into which youthful activity is directed in this and every Christian country. Look at the work of this ministry then, and it will be obvious at once what a fatal deficiency is the want of intellectual interest. The very truths with which it deals, in their original meaning, their history, their moral and social influence, must remain in a great degree unintelligible when there is not a constant pleasure in studying them. It is need-

less to say that they are so simple that a child may understand them. In one sense this is true. But the child-understanding, however precious, is not the understanding of the well-instructed Scribe, who is able to bring forth from his treasury things new and old. It is melancholy to think what wreck many make in this way by turning the deep things of God into baby-prattle, and narrowing the grand circumference of Christian truth to their own small circle of ideas. Everywhere Christianity suffers with the decay of living thought, and the poverty of intellectual comprehension in the clergy; and there never was a darker or sadder delusion than that which infected and may still infect certain classes of society, that a man whose mental capacities did not promise much success in the world might yet be useful in the Church. It is not, perhaps, too much to say that one half of the evils which have retarded the progress of Christian truth, and perilled the very existence of the Christian Church, have come, not, as is often said, from unsanctified talent, but from the degrading influence of mean talents, and narrowness of thought.

The same is no less true of the Bar or legal profession in all its bearings, and of the profession of Medicine. Each of these professions demands a vivacious intellectual interest, powers of real and independent thought. Neither their principles can be grasped, nor their highest applications

to the wellbeing of society appreciated, without these. All, it may be said, are not required to rise so high; there must be common as well as higher workmen in all professions,—"hewers of wood and drawers of water," as well as men of wide and commanding intelligence. And this is true. Only the question remains, whether those who never rise above the mechanical routine of the higher professions would not have been really more happy and useful in some lower department of industry. In contemplating a profession none should willingly set before them the prospect of being nothing but a Gideonite in it. And yet this must be the fate, and deserves to be the fate, of all who rush towards work for which nature has given them no special capacity. By aiming beyond their power, they are likely to fall short of the competency and success that, in some more congenial form of work, might have awaited them.

It seems so far, therefore, that there is a sufficiently plain line of guidance as to the choice of a profession. If your interest is not in study, if your bent is not intellectual, then there is one large class of professions for which *you* are not destined. You may be intellectual, highly so, and yet you may not choose any of these professions; circumstances may render this inadvantageous: or, while your intellectual life is inquisitive and powerful, your active ambition may be

no less powerful, and may carry you away. But at any rate, if you have not a lively interest in intellectual pursuits, neither the Church, nor the Bar, nor Medicine is your appropriate professional sphere. You can never be in any of these a "workman needing not to be ashamed."

Nor let it be supposed that there is anything derogatory in this lack of intellectual interest in the sense in which we now mean. It by no means implies intellectual ignorance or indisposition to knowledge, but simply no predominating desire for study as a habit and mode of life. It is not the book in the quiet room that interests you so much as the busy ways of the world, the commercial intercourse of men, or, it may be, some mechanical craft to which your thoughts are ever turning, and your hands inclining. How constantly are such differences observed in boys! Scholastic tastes weary and stupefy some who are all alert as soon as the unwelcome pressure is lifted from their minds, and their energies are allowed their natural play. Their aptitude is not for classic lore; their delight is not in lore at all, but in active work of some kind, the interest of which is of an every-day practical character.

The simple rule in such a case is—follow your bent. It may not shew itself so particularly as in some cases we have already supposed; but, at least, it is so far manifest. It is clearly not in certain directions, and so far therefore the field

of your choice is limited. Probe a little deeper and more carefully, and it may come more plainly into view. And, remember, one bent is really as honourable as another, although it may not aim so high. The young merchant is just as clearly "called" as the young clergyman, if he feel the faculty of business stirring in him. And who seem often more called than great mechanicians,—men often with little general knowledge, and little intellectual taste and sympathy, but who have a creative faculty of design, as determinate in its way as the art of the painter or the poet?

These are special cases. But in ordinary youth something of the same kind may be observed. There are boys designed by nature for commercial life; there are others plainly designed for mechanical employment. Nature has stamped their destiny upon them in signs which shew themselves, if sought after. Let not them and their friends try to countersign the seal of nature. This is always a grievous harm: a harm to the individual, and a possible harm to the world.

Even where Nature's indications may be obscure, there seems no other rule than to trace and follow them. Some boys of healthy and well-developed faculties, or, still more likely, of weak and unemphatic qualities, may seem to have no particular destiny in the world. Yet they have. Their place is prepared for them, if

they can find it. And their only hope of doing so is to observe nature, and follow it. She may not have written her lines broadly on their souls, but she has put tracings there, which may be found and followed. There are a few who may seem to find their position in the world more by accident than anything else. Circumstances determine their lot, and without any thought of theirs, they seem to get into the place most fitting them. Yet even in such cases, circumstances are often less powerful than are supposed, or, at least, they have wrought with nature, and this unconscious conformity has proved the strongest influence in fashioning such lives to prosperity and success.

It remains to be added that, while the view we have expressed of the worth of all honest work is to be strongly maintained, there are, no doubt, differences in work which, in relation to certain characters and temperaments, assume a moral importance. There are professions which have capacities of evil for certain natures, as there are others which have in themselves capacities of good, if rightly used. The saying of Dr Arnold, as to the profession of the law, may be remembered. It seemed to him a bad profession, and he would not, he strongly protested, have any of his sons enter upon it. This was a narrow, and even false, view. Dr Arnold, great man as he was, was not exempt from ex-

treme prejudices, as this shews. Yet it points, like many extreme views, to a partial truth. The law, grand and noble profession as it is in its higher, and, indeed, in all its right relations, presents, at the same time, peculiar possibilities of evil to an unstable or unconscientious will. It offers peculiar temptations. And there are other professions equally dangerous, if we may so say. They are apt to bring into play the inferior, and to hold in check the superior, elements of our nature. They put a constant strain upon the moral life, which it requires very healthy or unusual powers to withstand. Such professions are not bad, but they are trying; and it must be a serious consideration with the young, and the friends of the young, if they are fitted for such a trial.

It would be needless to say, avoid such professions; because, in point of fact, they are not to be avoided. They exist because the necessities of society demand them, (of course, I am not speaking of any but entirely honest professions which, in their conception, involve no violation of moral principle); they flourish as these same necessities become more complicated and refined; and while they do so, young men will seek their career in them laudably and well. It is vain and foolish, in such a matter, to broach mere theories—to cry where none will follow. But it is our duty to guide those who need

guidance; to say that such a door is open for some and not for others. For strong natures, there is strong work; for weak and less certain natures, there is also work, but not of the same kind. The back is fitted to the burden in a higher sense than is sometimes meant, if only the back do not overtask its powers, and assume to carry weight that was never meant for it.

II.

HOW TO DO IT.

SUPPOSING a young man to have chosen a profession and entered upon it, his next aim must be how to do well in it. This must be a thought inseparable from his choice, if it has been freely and rightly conducted. The profession or work which we have selected to do in the world, becomes the great channel of our regular and every-day activity; and how we shall order this activity in the best manner, so as most effectually to secure its reward and our own happiness, must be an anxiety to all beginning life.

Beyond doubt, the first condition of success

in every profession, is earnest devotion to its acquirements and duties. This may seem so obvious a remark, that it is scarcely worth making. And yet, with all its obviousness, the thing itself is often forgotten by the young. They are frequently loath to admit the extent and urgency of professional claims; and they try to combine with these claims devotion to some favourite and, even it may be, conflicting pursuit. This almost invariably fails. In rare cases it may be practicable with men of varied and remarkable powers. But, ordinarily, there is no chance of success in professional life for any who do not make the business of their profession, whatever it may be, their great interest, to which every other, save religion, must subordinate itself.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," is the motto of all industrial activity. In such a time as ours, it is so more than ever. If we do not do our work with might, others will; and they will outstrip us in the race, and pluck the prize from our grasp. "The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," says the same wise man. And this is true in various forms and illustrations; but scarcely ever in the race of business, or in the battle of industrial life. There the swiftest wins the prize, and the strongest gains in the strife.

As modern society is constituted, this element of strife is everywhere apparent. Competition, as it is called, in its action and reaction, makes up the great and ever-expanding circle of industrial civilisation. There may be many modifications of this principle demanded, in order to the complete and happy development of society. It would seem as if such modifications must come in the natural course of things, and with a growing consciousness of the moral conditions of social progress. But whatever checks may await the principle—however its operation may be relaxed and softened in various directions—it will always remain the essential spring of industrial activity. It will always be the fly-wheel of the world's business. And being so, it is clear that this business must task the earnest and steady devotion of all who engage in it. It will not wait the delays and offputtings of the man who gives it merely a share of his attention. While he is dawdling with a clever restlessness, it may be, it is passing from his hands into others' with a stronger and more persistent hold. Strength is everything in such a struggle—strength and opportunity! and the latter waits like a faithful servitor upon the former.

It ought to be a first principle, then, in beginning life, to do with earnestness what we have got to do. If it is worth doing at all, it is worth doing earnestly. If it is to be done well at all,

it must be done with purpose and devotion. Whatever may be our profession, let us mark all its bearings and details, its principles, its instruments, its applications. There is nothing about it should escape our study. There is nothing in it either too high or too low for our observation and knowledge. While we remain ignorant of any part of it, we are so far crippled in its use; we are liable to be taken at a disadvantage. This may be the very point the knowledge of which is most needed in some crisis, and those versed in it will take the lead, while we must be content to follow at a distance.

Our business, in short, must be the main drain of our intellectual activities day by day. It is the channel we have chosen for them; they must flow in it with a diffusive energy, filling every nook and corner. This is a fair test of professional earnestness. When we find our thoughts running after our business, and fixing themselves with a familiar fondness upon its details, we may be pretty sure of our way. When we find them running elsewhere, and only resorting with difficulty to the channel prepared for them, we may be equally sure we have taken a wrong turn. We cannot be earnest about anything which does not naturally and strongly engage our thoughts.

It will be found everywhere that the men who have succeeded in business have been the

men who have earnestly given themselves to it. Far more than mere talents or acquirements enthusiasm and energy in work carry the day. Everything yields before the strong and earnest will. It grows by exercise. It excites confidence in others, while it takes to itself the lead. Difficulties before which mere cleverness fails, and which leave the irresolute prostrate and helpless, vanish before it. They not only do not impede its progress, but it often makes of them stepping-stones to a higher and more enduring triumph.

There are few things more beautiful than the calm and resolute progress of an earnest spirit. The triumphs of genius may be more dazzling; the chances of good fortune may be more exciting; but neither are at all so interesting or so worthy as the achievements of a steady, faithful, and fervent energy. The moral elements give an infinitely higher value to the latter, while at the same time they bring it comparatively within the reach of all. Genius can be the lot of only a few; good fortune may come to any, but it would be the part of a fool to wait for it; whereas all may work with heartiness and might in the work to which they have given themselves. It is their simple duty to do this. It may seem but a small thing to do. No one certainly is entitled to any credit for doing it. Yet just because it is a duty it will be found bearing a rich

reward. The labour of the faithful is never in vain. The fruits will be found gathered into his hand, while the hasty garlands of genius are fading away, and the prizes of the merely fortunate are turned into vanity.

Where there is an adequately earnest devotion to the duties of one profession, it is likely that all the more ordinary business qualifications will follow. It may be well, however, to specify a few of these by way of impressing them upon the youthful mind. They are usually associated with the position and duties of the merchant and the tradesman rather than the barrister or the clergyman; but, in point of fact, they are applicable to all professions. All require them, and all suffer from the absence of them.

Among the most obvious and necessary of these qualifications is *punctuality*. Whatever we have to do should be done at the right time. To the busy man there is nothing more valuable than time. Every hour and every moment becomes filled up with its appointed duties; and attention to these duties at the moment when they fall to be performed is of the very essence of a business character. It is marvellous how comparatively easy the discharge of business becomes when this simple rule is observed, and how difficult and complicated it becomes when it is disregarded. It may be safely said that no

man can rise to distinction as a merchant, a barrister, or a physician, or indeed in any profession involving a complexity of work, without a strict observance of punctuality. In some professions, it may not be customary to exact or expect the same regard to this rule; but this is entirely without any warrant in reason, or the nature of the duties, to which the indulgence may be applied. For it is impossible to conceive any duties, not absolutely accidental, beyond the rule of punctuality. Touch them with this rule, and they will fall into order; leave them independent of it, and inextricable confusion will be the result.

Look at the matter as it plainly appears on reflection. If our time be filled up with professional duties, every one of these duties falls into its own place. There is an appropriate time for each—and punctuality is nothing else than attention to this. But the unpunctual man breaks down at some point. The duty remains undone, and the time for doing it is past. The inevitable result is that he more or less breaks down at every subsequent point. It is like the links of a chain stretched to the full—every link in its own place. But take out or abbreviate one link, and all fall into confusion. If a given duty remains undone at the proper point, it must encroach upon the time of some other duty, or remains undone altogether.

It might seem an easy thing to be punctual, but it is not an easy thing. It does not come to us naturally. No habits of order do, as may be observed in the utter disorder that characterises savage life, and low and untutored forms of life among ourselves. Punctuality is something we have all to learn; and of every profession—of all work—it is one of the first lessons—a lesson not only indispensable to ourselves, but due to others. How much so, every one knows who has to do with the unpunctual man. All is deranged by him; the time of others is wasted as well as his own. He becomes a nuisance in society; and men who have real work of their own would rather do anything than do business with him.

Every young man, therefore, should acquire punctuality among his first professional acquirements. Let him resolve to keep time,—to do everything in its place. Let him not yield to the delusion, common enough among the young, that this is an unimportant matter, in the power of any man, and which he can practise when he has more real need for it than as yet he has. Vain expectation! If he begins by neglecting it, he will almost assuredly end by neglecting it. Nothing is so hard *to unlearn* as a bad habit of this kind. It cleaves to the will even after the reason may strongly recognise its selfishness and inconvenience.

Another business qualification, although not so essential as the foregoing, is *despatch*. It is less of a moral qualification—more of a mental accomplishment. It is, however, in most professions, a very important accomplishment. *Bis dat, qui cito dat.* And the same thing might be said of work, when the quickness with which it is done is not the quickness of perfunctory, and therefore imperfect performance, but the quickness of a skilful and ready accomplishment. It is one of the great functions of a professional life to form this accomplishment; and every young man should certainly aim to have it. First, indeed, he should learn to do his work thoroughly. There is nothing can make up for the want of thoroughness. If he aim at despatch irrespective of this, he commits a fundamental mistake. He is like a man sharpening his weapons without testing their strength. And there are men who seem to do this. They acquire a smart and facile activity, which skims over a subject without laying hold of it. Despatch, in this sense, is not to be studied, but avoided. For it is better to do work thoroughly, however slowly or interruptedly, than to do work imperfectly, with whatever promptitude.

With this reserve it is well to cultivate despatch in business—not to dally over what may be done at once and promptly. Every one feels how much more satisfactory it is to

have work done quickly, if also well. Nothing, in fact, more makes the difference between the really good workman in any department and the inferior workman than the promptitude with which he carries out any piece of business intrusted to him. The more complicated business becomes, and the more it strains the energies, the more wonderfully would it seem to call forth these energies in many cases, so that a large amount of work is done both better and more promptly than a small amount in other cases. It is the triumph of method. The genius of arrangement overcomes the greatest difficulties, and secures results that would have appeared incredible without it.

The despatch that is really desirable comes in this way from a close attention to method. Quickness itself should not be so much the aim, because this may lead to summary and imperfect work; but quickness following from the perfection of a method which takes up everything at the right time and applies to it the adequate resources. This is the secret of a genuine promptitude. It is the issue of a right system more than anything.

Every profession implies *system*. There can be no efficiency and no advance without it. The meanest trade demands it, and would run to waste without something of it. The perfection

of the most complicated business, is the perfection of the system with which it is conducted. It is this that binds its complications together, and gives a unity to all its energies. It is like a hidden sense pervading it, responsive at every point, and fitly meeting every demand. The marvellous achievements of modern commerce, stretching its relations over distant seas and many lands, and gathering the materials of every civilisation within its ample bosom, are, more than anything, the result of an expanding and victorious system, which shrinks at no obstacles, and adapts itself to every emergency.

Accordingly, the professional man places the highest value upon system. However clever, ingenious, or fruitful in expedients a youth may be, if he is erratic and disorderly in his personal or mental habits, he is thereby unfitted for many kinds of work. The plodding and methodical youth will outstrip him, and leave him behind; and this not merely in the more mechanical professions, but to a great extent also in the more intellectual professions. Life itself, with all its free and happy outgoings, is systematic. Order reigns everywhere. And in no business of life can this great principle be neglected with impunity. Even on those who seem to obey it least externally, it operates. The very force that sustains them, and which, in its apparently irregular action, might seem to be defiant of

all law, is only preserved at all by some enveloping although undefined order.

The young must keep before them this necessity of all business. They may hear it sometimes spoken of among their fellows with indifference or scorn. "Red tape" has passed into a byword of contempt; and "red tape," in the sense of a mere dead and unintelligent routine, has deserved many hard things to be said of it. A man of routine, and nothing else, is a poor creature. System, which ceases to be a means, and becomes in itself—apart from the very object for which it was originally designed—an end, proves itself, in this very fact, a nuisance, to be swept away—the sooner the better. But the abuse of a thing is no argument against its use; and it is childish not to see this in any case. Routine, in and for itself, has no value; and the mind that settles on the mere outside of work, forgetful of its inner meaning and real aim, is necessarily a mind of feeble and narrow energies; but routine, as an organ of energetic thought and action—of a living, comprehensive intelligence, which sees the end from the means—is one of the most powerful instruments of human accomplishment. And there can be no profession without its appropriate and effective routine.

Let every youthful aspirant carefully learn the letter, without forgetting the spirit, of his pro-

fession. Let him subdue his energies to its system, but not allow the system to swallow up his energies. Let him be a man of routine, but let him be something more. Let him be master of its machinery, but capable of rising above it. With the former he cannot dispense; without the latter, he cannot be great or successful.*

But there is one qualification, in conclusion, more important than all — *conscientiousness*. Whatever be our profession, we should not only learn its duties carefully, and devote ourselves to them earnestly, but we should carry the light

* The following remarks on the importance of method in business, by the author of "Essays Written in the Intervals of Business," well deserve the attention of the young reader: —

"Our student is not intended to become a learned man, but a man of business; not a 'full man,' but a 'ready man.' He must be taught to arrange and express what he knows. For this purpose let him employ himself in making digests, arranging and classifying materials, writing narratives, and in deciding upon conflicting evidence. All these exercises require method. He must expect that his early attempts will be clumsy; he begins, perhaps, by dividing his subject in any way that occurs to him, with no other view than that of treating separate portions of it separately; he does not perceive, at first, what things are of one kind, and what of another, and what should be the logical order of those following. But from such rude beginnings method is developed; and there is hardly any degree of toil for which he would not be compensated by such a result. He will have a sure reward in the clearness of his own views, and in the facility of explaining them to others. People bring their attention to the man who gives them most profit for it; and this will be one who is a master of method."

and guidance of conscience with us into all its details and relations. Why should we particularise this? Conscience, of course, should animate and guide our whole life, and our business neither more nor less than other aspects of our life. Exactly so. This is the very thing we desire to shew. And it requires particular mention, just because it is the very thing we are apt to forget, practically, in the midst of professional activity, notwithstanding that it seems so obvious. Every profession has its peculiar temptations—its guiles calculated to lay conscience to sleep. Some have more than others; but, none can be said to be free from such snares. Is it wrong to do this, or allow that? May certain things not be done in the way of business that would scarcely be justifiable in private life? May not a professional position be fairly used for such and such ends? Such puzzles for conscience beset every profession; and notoriously they often receive solutions in consonance neither with religion nor morality.

Yet the true dictate of conscience everywhere must be, that there is nothing right or lawful in business that would not be so in the relations of private life. There cannot be two codes of honour or honesty. I cannot be an honest man, and not shrink from dishonesty in every shape. I cannot use my profession for any purpose which, apart from my profession, it

would be evil in me to compass. In everything —in the competitions of business, in the conflicts of ambition, in the rivalries of trade—Christian principle must be my guide. Never with impunity can the light of conscience be obscured, nor its scruples overbalanced.

Let the young take with them this principle into the entanglements of the world's affairs. Conscience may not always serve them as a positive guide. There may be intricacies which it cannot unravel. But at least it will always serve them as a negative warning. When conscience clearly pronounces against any practice of business, they must shun it. They must not tamper with it. They must be able to court the light of day in all they do. It is a sorry and pitiable shift when it becomes desirable to hide from scrutiny the inner mechanism of any profession.

The business which bases itself on conscience is stronger in this very fact than in the most skilful trade manœuvres. It is fair, and nothing tells in the end so well as fairness. The feeling of responsibility and the love of truth give not only strength, but "endow with diligence, accuracy, and discreetness, those commonplace requisites for a good man of business, without which all the rest may never come to be 'translated into action.'"* The gilding wears off the most in-

* Essays Written in the Intervals of Business, p. 98.

genious devices; the novelty fades away; the pretence appears below the mask; but the true gold of principle shines the more brightly the more it is tested, and endures as fresh as ever after all changes.

PART III.

STUDY.

I

HOW TO READ.

THE busiest professional life has its moments of leisure. It is the impulse and duty of every right-minded man to secure time for himself and his personal culture, as well as time for his business. This is something quite different from allowing any favourite or distracting pursuit to interfere with business. The one course, all men who would succeed in their profession will shun. The other course, all men who would not be mere professional machines will follow.

And what never ceases to be more or less a duty throughout life, is an imperative duty to the young. Their hours of leisure recur regu-

larly, their professional work has its formal limits of time; and beyond these limits, they have comparatively few cares or anxieties. Their minds are yet fresh and vigorous, athirst for knowledge, if not ruined by self-indulgence or spoiled by early education. To them those hours still in the morning of life which they can devote to self-culture, are among the most precious of all their life. "Is it possible," it has been asked, "to overrate the preciousness of the intervals of leisure, which afford a temporary release from the daily task, and restore the mind to its self-possession, and to the consciousness of its noblest powers and its highest aims. To one who is capable of appreciating its uses, every such pause is an emerging out of the grosser element, in which one is carried on blindly by the current, into the pure air and clear light, where the feet find a firm resting-place. It is an indispensable condition of every large outlook on the world without, and of all true insight into the world within. A condition; it is that, but nothing more. A golden opportunity; but one which may prove worse than useless." The young have this opportunity in their own hands. It may be wasted to their hurt, or even their ruin, but it may also be improved to their highest advantage.

The education of school is the mere portal to the higher education which every one may give

to himself. In many cases, in fact, it may be said that education does not begin till we leave school. The mental energies are disciplined and brought into activity, the capacity is formed; but the real life of thought is seldom awakened till those years of early manhood when most men have ceased to be under tutors and governors. It is sometimes strange how high mere scholastic training may go, and yet leave the general intellectual life dull and feeble. In all, save very rare cases, it seems to require that contact with reality which comes from intercourse with the world to quicken and fully develop the intellect. And it is only after this quickening has begun, that our higher and enduring education may be said to proceed. No doubt, there are certain elements of education which, if not acquired at school, can scarcely ever afterwards be acquired. It is hard to learn certain things, after the first freshness and tenacity of memory are gone. It is impossible, perhaps, to learn them thoroughly. No man, probably, ever made himself a first-rate scholar who had not mastered the peculiarities of the ancient classical languages while yet, comparatively, a boy. But valuable as such an acquisition in every point of view is, it is nothing more, strictly speaking, than an instrument of education. It is a charmed key to unlock treasures of intellectual knowledge that must

remain closed, or nearly so, to those who cannot use it. This capacity of use has not been got without mental stimulus and strengthening. Yet it is only after the years of reflection and critical appreciation have arrived, that even so valuable a power can be said to become a living and genuine education.

This must come in all cases from spontaneous rather than from forced impulse, from the free movement of the awakened mind rather than from the constrained and tutored guidance of the merely awakening mind. In the stage of scholastic pupilage many influences move the young, apart from the real desire of knowledge —emulation, ambition, the desire to stand well in the judgment of others—motives, "no doubt, fair, and liberal, and full of promise, but yet entirely distinct from an interest in study itself, and quite consistent with a real indifference and even distaste for it. It is only when all such motives are withdrawn, when the youth is subject to no attraction but of the pursuit itself, (disengaged from those which had been combined with it, if they did not supply its place,) only when his exertions are animated by this purely spontaneous and truly philosophical motive, can it be known either by himself or others what is really in him. How often has it happened that those who had won the most brilliant distinction in a competitive career have

sunk into inaction and obscurity, when the immediate object was attained; while noiseless steps, sustained by the pure love of knowledge, and in the face of the greatest difficulties and discouragements, have unheedingly and almost unconsciously gained a summit of admiring fame!" *

Of this higher self-education, everything that a man meets with in this world—all that he observes, and all that he does—may be the instruments. His profession, the accidents which surround it, the interest which it creates and promotes, have the effect of sharpening his mind to a keener and more real, or of opening it to a wider, view of things. While still at school, the world appears to us in vague and shadowy outline. We move only on the circumference of it. Its exciting realities are at a distance, both by reason of our imperfect comprehension of them, and the close family life which veils them from our gaze. This is the blessing of youth, that the dawning intelligence should abide, as it were, in a secluded nest of love till it receive wings to soar away. But when the time of its flight comes, there is a great world of knowledge opened to it. Things which it only saw dimly and far off before are now brought near to it.

* Bishop of St David's Address to the Members of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution.

Life, with its intense interests and conflicts, is felt to be a reality in which it mingles and has its part. Such intellectual experiences spring up at every stage of its first progress, and to all who improve these experiences there may be in them an education of the highest kind.

In one point of view, no doubt, this knowledge of the world is fraught with extreme danger to the young. It proves to many of them in every succeeding generation little more than the "opening of their eyes" to know good and evil; yet as the change is inevitable, it is useless to regret it on this score. It must come, and while it brings with it its chances of hurt, it is also a great opportunity of intellectual enlargement to those who rightly use it. It is something like the flight of the young birds from the parent nest. The experiment is one of trial, but it must be made, and amid its perils there is the secret joy of power and of acquisition. The world is no longer the roof-tree of branches, the warm "contiguity of shade" which has hitherto sheltered them, but the wide expanse of heaven, and the multiplied and glorious forms of nature, in whose never-ceasing activity they find the strength and happiness of their being.

The world must be to all a constant and insensible education. To many it is the most real and earnest education they ever receive. The

days of school may never have been to such, or have faded away from their memory. The days of spontaneous culture from direct intellectual sources may never have come to them; but their intercourse with the world has given forth a continued intellectual influence under which their powers have been excited and sometimes nurtured into rare gifts. It is not such remarkable cases indeed that we are now contemplating. But the existence of such cases serves to prove to what extent mere converse with life and its experiences may be the means not merely of making us more clever and skilful, but of really developing and enriching our mental resources—of cultivating within us a ripe and sympathetic faculty of wisdom which is one of the highest results of knowledge.

And if the world of human life be thus educative, the world of nature is equally or still more so. It is a constant school of high thoughts to all who love and study it. Who has not felt the singular awakening of intelligence that sometimes comes in early manhood from a merewalk into the quiet country in the fresh morning or the still evening! It is difficult to say how it is—but at such times the soul seems to take a start—to receive a new insight—to come forth in new and more sensitive vigour. Limits which have hitherto bound it fall away. Shadows with

which it has been fighting fly off, and it escapes into an atmosphere of divine reality. This is the secret of its sudden expansion. It is in some measure the same process, although arising from a different cause, and wholly free from all evil admixture, as that which takes place when the youth enters into his first free contact with the world. The great face of living fact in either case evokes the forces of his being as they have not been evoked before. The soul leaps from its boyhood trance to meet the vast life outside of it, as it circulates in human hearts, or in the common responsive heart of nature.

Communion with nature is apt to lose its freshness with the advance of life. There are few in whom it preserves the vivid educative fervour with which it moved them in youth or early manhood. Unless fed by constant culture from other sources, it is especially likely to fail and exhaust itself. There may be those so imperfect in endowment as never to realise the educative influences which it so richly provides. But with others, it continues a never-failing and fresh source of intellectual quickening. As they turn ever anew to it, they read new meanings in it—they find a new impulse in its contemplation; its sweet influences bind into unity or flush with light the knowledge they have been painfully gathering from other quarters. The young, if they know their own happi-

ness, will carefully cherish this love of nature, not as a mere pastime, nor as a mere sensuous delight, but as a constant source of intellectual life and illumination. Let them go forth into its open face with the problems that torment them, with the books that puzzle them, with the thoughts that are often a weariness and distraction; and it is wonderful what a quiet radiance will often steal into their hearts—how burdens will be lifted up, and the vision of a comprehensive Faith dawn upon them in glimpses, if not in perfect outline.

But more directly still than Life or Nature must Books be the means of the self-culture demanded of the young. Or rather, these must co-operate to make the culture of the former what it should be. Life, save in rare cases, will cease to be a living school, and nature also; both will fail to furnish fresh intellectual experience, where the mind is not fed by study in the common and more limited sense of the word. The love of books—the love of reading—therefore, is the most requisite, the most efficient instrument of self-education. Where this is not found in young or in old, all intellectual life soon dies out—rather, it may be said never to have been quickened. This is the distinction, as much as anything, between a mere sensuous life, whose only care is what it shall eat and what it

shall drink, and wherewithal it shall be clothed, and an intelligent life which looks "before and after."

A literary taste, apart from its higher uses, is among the most pure and enduring of earthly enjoyments. It brings its possessor into ever-renewing communion with all that is highest and best in the thought and sentiment of the past. The garnered wisdom of the ages is its daily food. Whatever is dignified and lofty in speculation, or refined or elevated in feeling, or wise, quaint, or humorous in suggestion, or soaring or tender in imagination, is accessible to the lover of books. He can command the wittiest or the wisest of companions at his pleasure. He can retire and hold converse with philosophers, statesmen, and poets; he can regale himself with their richest and deepest thoughts, with their most exquisite felicities of expression. His favourite books are a world to him. He lives with their characters; he is animated by their sentiments; he is moved by their principles. And when the outer world is a burden to him—when its ambitions fret him, or its cares worry him—he finds refuge in this calmer world of the past, and soothes his resentment and stimulates his languor in peaceful sympathy with it.

Especially does this love of literature rise into enjoyment when other and more active

enjoyments begin to fade away. When the senses lose their freshness, and the limbs their activity, the man who has learned to love books has a constant and ever-growing interest. When the summit of professional life has been attained, and wealth secured, and the excitements of business yield to the desire for retirement, such a man has a happy resource in himself; and the taste which he cultivated at intervals, and sometimes almost by stealth, amidst the pressure of business avocations, becomes to him at once an ornament and a blessing. It is impossible to overrate the comparative dignity, as well as enjoyment, of a life thus well spent, which has preserved an intellectual feeling amidst commercial ventures or sordid distractions, and brightens at last into an evening of intellectual wisdom and calm.

It becomes a matter of great importance, therefore, to young men, how best to cultivate this intellectual taste or love for literature. How shall they best order their studies? Reading, with occasional lectures, must be the great instrument of all spontaneous education. How shall they read to the best advantage?

It must be obvious at once that mere desultory reading cannot be the best thing. Whether it be liable to all the objections that have been urged against it, we need not inquire. Probably

it is not. There have been those who have found in desultory reading a mental stimulus, which has not only proved a high culture for themselves, but has carried them to heights of intellectual fame. Sir Walter Scott is a notable example. He indulged, when a youth, in the most indiscriminate and desultory course of reading. Whatever came to hand in the shape of tale, romance, history, poetry, he devoured with a large and unregulated appetite. But nothing can be made of such rare instances for general guidance. An intellect of such capacity as Scott's was, in a measure, independent of common discipline. The strength of the craving itself may be truly said, in his case, to have more than "compensated the absence of any outward rule. It fastened instinctively on that which was suited to its tastes. It converted everything it touched into the nourishment it required. Nothing was wasted; all was digested and assimilated, and passed into the life-blood of his intellectual system." But what was the appropriate aliment of such an intellect as Scott's might prove the hurt and even the poison of a common mind. Assuredly, it can no more be the best thing to read in a desultory manner, than to do anything else in a desultory manner. No more than our industrial life could prosper if we merely did what came to hand, can our intellectual life prosper if we merely read what

comes to hand. The very idea of intellectual discipline implies the application of some rule to our studies.

But if the absence of rule be absurd and hurtful, it is not less so—often it is more so—to endeavour to order our reading by too strict and formal a rule. It is to be feared many young men make shipwreck of their plans by too ambitious aims in this direction. For it is a great mistake to suppose that the young, and young men in particular, have a natural aversion to rules. Boys, perhaps, have. But there is a time of life when a young man begins to be thoughtful, and to project schemes for his self-improvement, when he is really in more danger of yielding to an over-formality in his studies than anything else. And this danger has been probably increased by the influence of "Young Men's Associations," and the other institutions by which society seeks to help and promote this laudable impulse. The field of intellectual labour is mapped out by the young man, and he gives so much time to this department, and so much time to another department. He thinks it necessary to read certain books, and to make digests of them, although, after all, he feels very little interest in their contents, and is conscious that he gets but little intellectual benefit from them. He sets a scheme of study before him, and he labours at it with an unde-

viating regularity and devotion, which, many years after, he will look back upon with incredulous amazement.

Now there is something noble, beyond doubt, in such conduct. There is a seed of self-discipline in it which may bear fruit many days after, even if the scheme of self-imposed study should break down and fail of its ends. But it is a serious misfortune—it may prove a ruinous result—that it should break down, as such a scheme almost certainly will. In its nature it cannot last. It will fall to pieces of its own weight. For beyond a certain age the intellectual activities cannot be drilled after this manner. They will not work by mere rule. Especially they become impatient of overdone and exaggerated rules. Everybody who has tried it, I think, will confess that there is nothing so hard as to carry on mere routine studies beyond the age of early manhood. The will shifts off the irksomeness of the duty in every possible manner. Keener intellectual interests are constantly supplanting those which lie to order before us. And the result sooner or later always is, that it is the study which really interests us that carries the day. All others fall aside, and are taken up at always wider intervals, till they drop out of sight altogether.

The truth is, that the man cannot work after the same methods as the boy. Spontaneous education cannot proceed on the same principles

and rules as scholastic education. The latter has its chief support in external rules. It is under authority. But the former must be sustained by a constant outflow of the internal sympathy in which it takes its rise. A man will only continue to study that in which he feels a real interest and pleasure, constantly prompting him to mental activity. It will not be the books that others may suppose to be the right thing for him, but the books that he likes, the books that have an affinity with his intellectual predilections, that he will read, and that will truly profit him.*

So far, therefore, it may be concluded, in answer to the question, How a young man shall read to the best advantage?—that he should select some particular department of knowledge which he feels interesting, and that within this department he should read carefully and studiously. If he only once make this selection, and make it rightly, other things will adjust themselves. He will not need very definite rules, nor will he need to concern himself about strict conformity with what rules he may have. The varied and desultory reading in which he may indulge will adapt itself in various ways to the main intellectual interest of his life. It will appropriate to its purpose the most stray information, while

* "No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en;
In brief, sir, study *what you most affect*"—

is the compendious advice of our great dramatic Poet.

again the vivid central fire of his intellectual being will cast a light and meaning often around the most desultory particulars.

It may not seem easy to make such a choice; but every one more or less unconsciously makes it. The important matter is to recognise it to yourselves, and to build up your intellectual education upon it; because it can be really built up in no other manner. It is only by studying some particular subject with a view to mastering it, or some parts of it, that you can ever acquire a really studious insight and power. Nothing will enable you to realise your mental gifts, and to feel yourselves in the free and useful possession of them, like the triumph of bringing within your power and making your own some special subject, so that you can look from the height of an accomplished difficulty, and advance from the fulness of a successful faculty.

The advantage of such a central subject of intellectual interest is not only that it gives a unity to all your other reading, but that it preserves the idea of study—of steady and patient work in your mind. This is the best cure for desultory and self-indulgent literary habits. You feel that you have got something to do—that you are making progress in a definite direction—that you are rising to a clearer height of mental illumination over some pathway that you desire to explore. This is not only plea-

sant, but it costs you pains, and it is all the more pleasant, certainly all the more improving, that it does cost pains. For this is a condition of all genuine education, that it call forth a deliberate, anxious, and persistent mental action. It may not be a great subject that engages your interest, but it is not necessary that it should be so in order that you may gain great advantages from a studious attention to it; for here, as in many cases, the "chase is better than the game." The power of mental discernment, the capacity of inductive inference, of sifting confused facts or statements, and penetrating to the life of truth beneath them, are the highest gifts to be got. Definite results of knowledge are comparatively unimportant; for such gifts are, so to speak, the sinews of all knowledge. And when once you have mastered, or done what you can by strenuous energy to master, any one thing, you are prepared to enter on a wide increase of intellectual possessions. To plant your foot on any single spot of knowledge, and make it your own by reading about it—by studying it in the light of whatever helps you can command—is to brace your mental vigour, and to secure it a free and powerful play in whatever direction it may be turned.

Study, accordingly, should be definite. It is only some aim in view that can give to your intellectual employment the character of study.

Reading should neither be desultory nor routine—but select. It is only some principle of selection that can impart continuity and life to your thoughts. What this principle of selection should be in each case, it is impossible to determine. Every one must be the best judge for himself in such a matter. And if he do not force nature, or give it too much licence, he will have little difficulty in finding what lies closest to his interest. To every young man we commend the wise and weighty words of Bacon in his famous Essay on Studies. There is a piquancy and richness of exaggeration in them, here and there, that leave them above any mere imitation, but that serve to impress them all the more vividly upon the mind.

"Studies," he says, "serve for delight, for ornament, and ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. . . . . They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies; simple men admire them; and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation.

Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not cursorily; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books; also distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And, therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning to seem to have that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtle; natural philosophy, deep; morals, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend: "Abeunt studia in mores." Nay, there is no stond or impediment in the wit but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises; bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So, if a man's wit

be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for, in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again; if his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the schoolmen; if he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove or illustrate another, let him study the lawyer cases; so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt."

II.

BOOKS—WHAT TO READ.

"SOME books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." If this was true in Lord Bacon's time, how much more so is it in a time like ours, when books have multiplied beyond all precedent in the world's history. It has become, in fact, a task beyond the power of any man to keep up, as it is said, with the rapidly-accumulating productions of literature, in all its branches. To enter a vast library, or even one of comparatively modest dimensions, such as all our large towns may boast, and survey the closely-packed shelves—the octavos rising above quartos, and duodecimos

above both—is apt to fill the mind with a sense of oppression at the mere physical impossibility of ever coming in contact with such multiplied sources of knowledge. The old thought, *Ars longa, vita brevis*, comes home with a sort of sigh to the mind. Many lives would be wasted in the vain attempt. The inspection of a large library certainly cannot be recommended to inspire literary ambition. The names that shine in the horizon of fame are but specks amid the innumerable unknown that look down from the same eminence of repose.

Yet this thought of incapacity—and of the vanity as well as the glory of literature—in the contemplation of a large library, is rather the thought of the ideal scholar than of common sense. The latter sees in a great collection of books the simple and efficient means of diffusing intellectual life through innumerable channels; and literary and political history, too, is pregnant with examples of the benefits which have sprung from mere vicinity to a well-stored library. It is not merely that genius has been excited, and the aspiration for fame kindled in some hearts where it might have otherwise lain torpid; but it is that hundreds have owned a happier intellectual, and often also a happier moral stimulus from such an advantage. Lord Macaulay has spoken of what he himself knew in this respect, and especially of an "eminent soldier and distinguished diplomatist who has

enjoyed the confidence of the first generals and statesmen which Europe has produced in our day," and who confessed that his success in life was mainly owing to his advantageous position when a young man in the vicinity of a library. "When I asked to what he owed his accomplishments and success, he said to me, When I served when a young man in India — when it was the turning-point in my life—when it was a mere chance whether I should become a mere card-playing, hooka-smoking lounger — I was fortunately quartered for two years in the neighbourhood of an excellent library which was made accessible to me."

The influence of books at a certain stage of life is more than can be well estimated. The principles which they inculcate, the lessons which they exhibit, the ideals of life and character which they portray, root themselves in the thoughts and imaginations of young men. They seize them with a force which to after years appears scarcely possible. And, when their faculties in mere restlessness might consume themselves in riotous frivolity and self-indulgence, they often receive in communion with some true and earnest book a right impulse which turns them to safety, happiness, and honour.

The task of selection perhaps might be fairly left to individual taste and judgment. Every

mind has an eclectic quality which inclines to its own proper mental food, and the choice of books must in the end mainly depend upon this. It may be very doubtful whether the choice is likely to be according to the exalted advice of Bacon, so that "every defect of the mind may have a special receipt." This is too reflective a standard. It is only applicable after all within certain limits. To try to nourish the mind on what would be mainly medicine to it, would be no more possible than to nourish the body after a similar manner. A healthy appetite for what is fitting and congenial must be the main guide and unconsciously selective instrument of nutriment in both cases.

Undoubtedly this appetite is feeble, and in many cases perverted. Nature, it may be said, does not set the same safeguard around it in the mental as in the physical world. The stomach rejects unwholesome food, but the minds of the young often feed on garbage, and even poison. There is some truth in this, but also some exaggeration. A healthy intellect which goes in search of its own intellectual food must be the basis of all spontaneous education. The cases in which this interest assumes a perverted craving are not so much cases for advice as for definite curative treatment of some kind. Our chief aim must be to offer some remarks which may serve to guide the healthy faculty for know-

ledge. These remarks may be in the shape of warning as well as advice; but the desire after self-improvement and intellectual discipline must be assumed in all who are likely to derive any benefit from them.

While books have multiplied in such numbers, it may be truly said that good books are by no means oppressively numerous. They have not grown certainly in proportion to the general increase of literary productions. And there are those who delight to reckon up how few really first-rate authors they would be pleased to take with them into studious and contented retirement. Shall we say that the young man should select a few such authors, and confine himself to their diligent and recurring study? How admirably would they mould his principles and refine his taste, and inspire and chasten his whole intellectual life! But this is really what the young man will never do, or almost never. Such schemes of studious devotion to a few great authors are rather the dreams of elder ease, and an over-curious culture, than ideas that ever enter into the heads of the young. They remain dreams for the most part even with those who delight to court them. In conformity with their source, moreover, they are generally confined to authors of an older time, when thought seemed riper, and wit brighter, and poetry flushed with a richer imagination than in these

last times. The intellectual Epicurean who would feed only on a few choice authors is generally also the *laudator temporis acti*, and this of itself is enough to place his recipes for intellectual improvement beyond the sympathy or imitation of the young. For if there is one law more sure than another in mental development, it is that the young must take their start in thought and in taste from the models of their own time—the men whose fame has not yet become a tradition, but is ringing in clear and loud notes in the social atmosphere around him.

Such very ideal schemes of study, therefore, will not do for young men. They *will* read the authors of their time, and find their chief interest in these authors. It requires a culture which as yet they are only in search of to find equal or even a higher interest in older forms of literature, and in the great masterpieces of the past.

Books may be classified conveniently enough for our purpose in four divisions:—

1. Philosophical and Theological.
2. Historical.
3. Scientific.
4. Books of Poetry and Fiction.

The bare enumeration suggests visions of impossible attainment. Even with such general divisions of the field of study before him, every

young man must feel how far it exceeds his compass. He must choose, if he would do any good, some definite portion of the field; and even confine himself mainly to some share of this, if he would turn his reading into an instrument of real education. The utmost we can hope to do is to indicate for his guidance some of the most characteristic features of these divisions, and some of the books in each that claim the attention of all that would be students in it.

1. The first of these divisions may seem less in the way of young men seeking a general culture rather than a definite intellectual discipline. But, as we have already explained, it is only through some special study that any intellectual mastery can be gained; and we commonly find that books in philosophy and theology are at once amongst the most attractive and the most effective sources of such study. The young man in the full flush of his opening powers is naturally drawn to the examination and discussion of the highest problems that concern his being and happiness. There is a sanguine daring of speculation in the fresh and inexperienced mind which dashes at questions before which the veteran philosopher, warned by many defeats, sadly recoils. It may be often very useless in its results this youthful speculation, but, if not altogether misdirected, it may prove the most

precious training. The mind rises, from its very defeats in such service, more vigorous and more elastic.

The philosophical literature of our country is, if not the most erudite and lofty, the richest, the most varied, and (not excepting that of France) the most intelligible philosophical literature of the world. It has the great virtue of keeping close to life and fact. And so there are few even of its masterpieces which may not be read and understood by the general reader. The great work of Locke on the "Human Understanding" may be said to be typical of it in this respect. No doubt there are schools of philosophy among ourselves, as well as in Germany, that profess to look down upon such empirical philosophy as that of Locke; but we do not now enter into any such questions. The more spiritual philosophy may have the advantage; for ourselves we think that it has; but there is nevertheless something peculiarly British in the manly and straightforward simplicities of Locke's mind, and the intelligible, unpretentious character of his philosophy. Every young man who has a love for speculation, ought to study his works. He should try to master the great work we have just mentioned. At any rate, he should master his small work on the "Conduct of the Understanding;" and to make even this little treatise his own thoroughly, and enter into

all its meaning, he will find a most bracing and wholesome mental exercise.

The writings of Dr Reid, the great master, if not the father of the Scottish philosophy, partake of the same vigorous and homely qualities as those of Locke, if of inferior range and grasp. The student will have recourse at least to the early work of this philosopher—"An Inquiry into the Human Mind"—as marking an important epoch in British thought, and as characterised by some of its most significant and instructive features. If he is really a student of philosophy, he will not be content with this, but he will delight to trace the developments of the Scottish school of thought, from its beginnings in Hutcheson's "System of Moral Philosophy," on through the writings of Reid, of Smith, of Stewart, of Brown, and of Hamilton. The great work of Smith, on the "Moral Sentiments," would of itself prove a most valuable discipline to any young philosopher.

These are merely hints: of course they can be nothing more. There are other names equally if not more important. There is the great name of Coleridge, who, from his deeper speculative sympathies, and richer culture, is more likely than any we have mentioned to draw the admiration of young students. They could not come in contact with a higher and more stimu-

lating mind in many respects. The "Aids to Reflection" has been to thoughtful young men for two generations, perhaps, more of a handbook of speculation than any other book in the language, and much high-minded and noble seriousness has sprung from its study. It would be difficult to say that, taking all things into consideration, any book of the kind has higher claims upon the attention of the young. The great matter to bear in mind is, that variety of acquaintance with philosophical literature ought not so much to be the object as familiar acquaintance with and mastery of some particular work. The former is the part of the professed philosopher—the latter is the proper part of the student, to which the other may be added—should opportunity permit.

The same thing is especially true in regard to Theological books. A knowledge of theological literature is the business of the professed theologian. It can only be possible to others in rare circumstances. But every thinking man should know something of theology, and there are young minds that will by an irresistible impulse seek their main intellectual discipline in the reading of theological authors. To such minds a few great books in our English theological literature would be the appropriate and the highest aliment. But who shall venture to point out these? If the task is difficult in other

departments, it becomes in this almost hopelessly embarrassed.

Men fight for sides in theology as they fight for nothing else. The polemics of philosophy are sometimes keen, but the polemics of theology tear society asunder. They are felt to involve matters of life and death; and every passion that makes life dear, and every interest that makes death an anxiety, combine to intensify the struggle between rival theological systems. Peaceful and meditative spirits may sigh over this state of things, but probably it will last as long as the world lasts, and men are but dim searchers for truth amid the shadows of earthly existence.

It arises from this state of things that young men have less freedom and openness of view in theology than in almost any other department of knowledge. They belong, so to speak, to a side which guards them jealously, and will let them see only one class of books. They are often taught to think that there is nothing good or excellent beyond these. This is an unhappy attempt—unhappy whether it succeeds or whether it fails. For, in the one case, a narrow sectarianism, which does not so much care for truth as for party, is likely to be the result. And, in the other case, the mind is likely, when it finds that a game has been playing with it, and that there are interesting tracks of theolo-

gical inquiry of which it has been kept ignorant, to take a rebound to an opposite extreme, and run to wildness.

It is better, however difficult it may be, to try to direct a spirit of inquiry in the young. To reject authority in this, any more than in any other department of knowledge, is a simple absurdity. From the very nature of the inquiry, authority must be here especially valuable. Yet at the same time to abandon freedom, is to abdicate one's right of reason and of conscience, from which no good can ever come

But who is to assume the office of director? In reference to our existing theological literature it may be safely said, that it would not be wise for any one to assume this function save in a most general manner. To adjudicate between different schools of theological opinion, some of which are only in progress of development, all of which have living representatives, would be an invidious and ungrateful task. If there are any minds can get satisfaction from the clever analysis that may be made of some of these schools with a view to warning off the young from them, the writer's mind is not of this class. The unhappy thing is, that such warnings are more apt to point forwards than backwards, and this not through any moral perversity in the young, but from the mere insatiable desire of knowledge. There is a love in all hearts, and

in the young theological heart more than all others, for *the dangerous*. If any book is labelled dangerous, there is a rush of curiosity towards it which no remonstrances can deter.

Then there is this special difficulty. One constantly feels that he may be more in affinity with the spirit of an author whose views he might hesitate to recommend to the young, than with many authors whose views are of a more orthodox character. Who has not felt, for example, the charm of Robertson of Brighton's sermons, which have circulated so much among the young in our day? There is a life in these sermons which sermons but rarely have—an energy of fresh, and genial, and loving earnestness which move the heart and search the springs of all religious feeling in the inquiring and thoughtful. Yet there are here and there rash and exaggerated utterances in them. One must take the evil with the good. And surely he would be a prejudiced father who would not rejoice to see his son moved by such sermons, his soul awakened, and life made more earnest to him, because they may contain some views of doctrine from which he may wish to guard his son. The wise parent would accept the good and try to avert the evil. He would do this by quiet and reasonable counsel, and not by mere dogmatism or angry argument.

Passing from our current or recent theological

literature, there are three great writers, each marking a century, we may say, of our past English theology, that may be very confidently recommended to the study of young men. These writers are Butler, Leighton, and Hooker. —Butler, a master of theological argument, strong in logic, calm in spirit, comprehensive in aim.—Leighton, like Pascal, a genius in religious meditation, deep, reflective, yet quick, sensitive, and tender—the *beau-idéal* of a Christian muser; never losing hold of the most practical duties in the most ethereal flights of his quaint and holy imagination.—Hooker, a thinker of transcending compass, sweeping in the range of his imperial mind the whole circumference of Christian speculation—rising with the wings of boldness to the heights of the Divine government, and yet folding them with the sweetest reverence before the Throne.

There are many other great names in English theological literature, but there are none greater than these. There are none upon the whole that will form so admirable a discipline for the young. Some may prefer the passionate and majestic pages of Jeremy Taylor—the quaint spiritualising felicities of Hall—the didactic stately arguments of Pearson—the fervid and pleading pathos of Baxter; but these, and many other writers, are more professional, so to speak, in their interest. They do not command such wide sympathies as the others do. They

are less likely to attract, therefore, and less likely to influence the minds of the young.

Before passing from this class of books, it may be proper to say a special word or two as to the necessity of studying the Book of books—the Bible. A feeling of reverence almost prevents us from mentioning it in connexion with other books, as if it merely claimed its share of attention along with them. It is implied, on the contrary, in the whole conception of these chapters, that its study must lie at the foundation of all education. Every aspect of life and duty has been viewed by us in the light of the Divine Revelation of which the Bible is the record. And clearly, therefore, its reading must occupy a quite peculiar place. It is demanded of us in a sense in which the reading of no other book is demanded. They may or may not be read, but the Bible must be read by us as Christians. We neglect a plain and bounden duty, and virtually disclaim the Christian character, if we neglect to read it.

Do young men sufficiently realise, even those of them who are thoughtful and well-intentioned, this necessity of reading the Scriptures? They read them, we shall suppose, at church and elsewhere—on Sunday, and other times too; but are they at pains to understand what they read? Do they make the Scriptures a study? We fear that by young as by old the Bible is

often read in a very imperfect and unintelligent manner. Not even the same trouble and inquiry are given to it as to other books. And yet, more than any book for general perusal, it may be said to need such trouble and inquiry. It is marvellously adapted, indeed, to the unlearned as well as the learned. "He that runneth" may "read, mark, and inwardly digest" its simple truths; but it also rewards and calls for the most patient, earnest, and critical devotion of mind. Its pages are fitted for the capacity of a child, yet they shew depths which the highest intellect cannot fathom. They contain "line upon line, here a little and there a little," for every docile, however untutored, Christian; yet they also claim, in order to be adequately known, the most devoted powers of application and reflection.

Every young man, therefore, should give his earnest attention to the reading of Scripture. Let him not suppose that he can easily know all that it contains. Let him not be contented to read a chapter now and then, rather as a duty than as a living interest and education. No reading should be so interesting to him; none, certainly, can form to him so high an education. It is not only his Christian intelligence and sensibility that will be everywhere drawn forth in the perusal of its blessed pages, but his taste, his imagination, and reason will be exercised

and regaled in the highest degree. Its poetry is, beyond all other poetry, incomparable, not only in the height of its Divine arguments, as Milton suggests, but in "the very critical art of composition." Its narratives are models of simplicity and graphic life. It abounds in almost every species of literary excellence and intellectual sublimity. It is, above all, the inspired Word of God—the source of all spiritual truth and illumination. Whatever you read, therefore, do not forget to read the Bible. Let it be as the "man of your counsel, and the guide of your right hand," as a "light to your feet, and a lantern to your path." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word."

2. If we proceed now to Historical books, the task of selection becomes a less difficult one. Never, certainly, was an age richer in great historical works than our own. And not only so, but, what is more important still, the spirit of a higher historical method has penetrated many departments of inquiry, and is working out great results. It is the essence of this spirit to search

reputed facts to the bottom—to explore beneath the accumulations of tradition and the glosses either of glory or of scandal with which great characters have been overlaid; and although it may have in some instances run riot in mere opposition to popular and long-standing prejudices, beyond doubt it has cleared up many of the outlines of the past, and made it nearer and more real to us than it had ever been before. Older histories, notwithstanding the fascination of their style, and the epic proportions of their details—rounded rather to suit imaginary preconceptions of the subject than its actual exigences—have been superseded, and new ones have taken their place. Hume, always charming by his graceful and flowing narrative, is no longer an authority. He was not even a very trustworthy reporter of what he read; and others have read far more deeply than he ever did, and turned up facts of which he was wholly ignorant. The schoolboy fancy of many still living lingers with a fond and pleasing regret around the pages of Goldsmith's "History of Rome," and his graphic portraitures of Roman character; but Roman history has been revolutionised in its very conception since Goldsmith's days.

The spirit of this new historical method is of great importance to the young. It lies near to the root of all genuine education. The mind acquires from it the capacity of looking for the

truth—of sifting the essential from the accidental—the living from the conventional—and piercing below the incrusted dogma of popular narrative or description to the direct face of facts. It learns an instinct of fairness—a tact of discernment not easily seduced by arts of rhetoric or by any cleverness of special pleading. And there is no gain of education greater and none more rare than this power of critical and independent judgment, which cares for what is right and true in the face of all partisanship and lies.

Of the many great historical works which our age has produced, there are some so popular and universally read that it is needless to recommend them. Macaulay's wonderful volumes, as they successively appeared, carried captive the minds of old and young. The magic flow of his periods—the brilliant and dashing colours of his portraits—his illuminating comprehension of his subject, and the flush of radiance which he poured on certain parts of it—his rich political wisdom and magnanimous spirit of patriotism—all served to give to his "History of England" an attraction which has been seldom paralleled, and which only a very rare genius could have wielded and sustained. While the young read such a history with delighted enthusiasm, they should remember that they must return to it and ponder it well before they can really get from it the mental strengthening and elevation it is fitted to afford.

The works of Hallam, of Thirlwall and Grote, of Milman and Prescott, of Froude and of Motley, shew in their mere enumeration what a field lies before the student here. The careful study of any one of these histories is an education in itself; and there is no mental task could be recommended as more appropriate and more valuable to the young man. Take Dean Milman's "History of Latin Christianity," for example, as covering the widest field of facts. What a quickening, bracing, and informing study would such a book make—all the more perhaps that it cannot be read like Macaulay's volumes, under the continued pressure of a high-wrought interest. In some respects, indeed, it is very hard and painful reading, in the old sense of the latter word. It costs pains—it strains the faculty of attention—it tasks and wearies the memory. All great histories, even Macaulay's, more or less do this. To read them as a whole is never an easy matter; and it will be found, in point of fact, they are but rarely read and studied so completely as they ought to be. The young man cannot brace himself to any higher effort, or one more likely to tell upon his whole intellectual life. The study of such works as we have mentioned, or of many others that might be mentioned—Clarendon's graphic pages—Gibbon's magnificent drama—may serve to date an epoch in his educational development. Many can recall how the perusal of such a masterpiece as Gib-

bon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" served to raise the conception of what the human mind could do, and left an indelible impress on the intellectual character.

In studying such works the aim should be to master them, and if possible their subject, so thoroughly as to be able to exercise a free judgment as to what you read. To read merely that you may repeat the views of the historian, or perhaps imbibe his prejudices, is a poor and even an injurious result. You must read rather that you may understand his subject; and if he is really a great historian, he will enable you to do this to some extent independently of his own representations. Using his pages, you must yet look through them, and endeavour to realise the course of facts for yourself. Especially aim, by an active sympathy and intelligent perception of what is going on around you,—of the history that is being daily wrought out under your eyes and in your own experience,—to get some living apprehension of the past, some real understanding of its great events and characters, its social manners, its laws, institutions, and modes of government, the condition of the people in their different ranks and relations, the interior of their family life, their diet, their industry, and their amusements. It is but recently that historians have recognised the necessity of treating some of these topics, but it is becoming more and more evident that it is such topics, and not

the mere details of battles or of royal doings, that form the real staple of history. Whatever contributes to unveil the past, to make it an intelligible reality and not a mere shadowy picture, is the right material of history; and its highest use is to give such an insight into the past as may happily guide and influence the future.

According to the old definition, "history is philosophy teaching by examples;" and the constant instruction which it presents to the student is certainly among its greatest advantages. While calling into strenuous exercise so many faculties of the understanding—attention, memory, comprehension—and filling the imagination with its grand outlines, it ministers no less to the moral reason and judgment. It is everywhere a drama of moral retribution. And so it is that something of the same lofty feeling—half-pleasure, half-awe—that comes from the perusal of a great tragedy, comes also from the perusal of a great history. The realities of a higher Divine order, everywhere traversing the complications of human intrigue—the confusions of earthly politics—shew themselves in unmistakeable radiance. They come forth like the handwriting on the wall, stamping themselves in silent characters amid all the excitements of human conflict, and the promiscuous uproar of human passion.

The student, therefore, if he learn anything, should learn political and moral wisdom in the school of history. Such volumes as Macaulay's and Motley's must teach him how political success can only be effectually grounded on fairness, rectitude, and truth. Manœuvre may succeed, and falsehood triumph for a while, but their end is shame and discomfiture. Of the many excellences of Mr Motley's historical labours, one of the chief is the clearness with which he has seized the moral element in history, and wrought it into the fabric of his narrative, not by way of dogmatic obtrusion, but simply as a natural part of his subject. The reader is not merely thrilled with a vivid story, and the life-like delineations of one of the most powerful pencils that ever sketched human character and action; but he is, moreover, touched at every point by the unfolding lessons of a great moral spectacle.

3. Of Scientific books it is scarcely for one to speak who has not given some special attention to the subject. Our age, however, is more rife in such books as may help the young in cultivating scientific inclinations than any other age has been. Of all departments of knowledge, indeed, that of popular science may be said to be making the most advance. And the most competent judges will allow that much real pro-

gress may be made in scientific attainment by the mere energy of attention, by experiment, and careful observation of phenomena, without the qualifications of the higher mathematics, which fall to the lot of but a few. Certainly much of the intellectual discipline of scientific study may be got by independent and self-directed efforts. Some of the most distinguished names in science have been self-taught students.

Among the departments of knowledge there are those who claim for science the very highest function in education. And without entering into any polemic on the subject, there can be no doubt that it affords educational advantages of the noblest kind. It is impossible to study the great laws of nature, the wonderful complications of its phenomena, and the beautiful relations which link and harmonise them, without having our mental and our moral faculties equally stimulated. The mechanism of the heavens—the structure of the earth, and its countless living objects—the structure of our own bodies—the composition of the air we breathe—the light whereby we see—the dust on which we tread—are all subjects equally fitted to discipline and delight our minds. And he can scarcely claim, in any sense, to be an educated man, who remains entirely ignorant of such subjects. It is true that man long remained ignorant of them, and that the intellectual civi-

lisation of the ancient nations was based but in a small degree on any accurate knowledge of physical phenomena. But this can be no excuse for modern ignorance of the same phenomena. It is the mark of a small and contracted mind to shun any department of knowledge, and one especially of such intense interest and importance.

Why, indeed, should there be any conflict between one department and another? Why should the advocates of classical and of "useful" knowledge hold high contention, and vex the educational atmosphere with their din? Both are excellent in their place. The former never could perish out of human culture without ruinous loss. The latter must advance as the very condition of human progress. To some minds the former will prove the fitting discipline—to others the latter. For the classicist to abuse natural studies, or the physicist to abuse classical studies, is equally absurd.

Assuredly the study of nature is no mere dry and "useful" study. It is instinct with poetry and thought at every point; and in our own day many writers have clothed the truths of science in the most elevated and attractive diction. Sir John Herschel, Sir David Brewster, Hugh Miller, Mr Lewes, Mr Hunt, and others have all written of science so as to interest any but the most indifferent minds. And the young student

who would follow out such studies will find in the writings of these well-known authors at once their plainest and their highest guides. Such works as those of Hugh Miller on geology, and Mr Lewes's "Sea-side Studies," and Professor Johnston's "Chemistry of Common Life," and Mr Faraday's "Lectures for the Young," not to mention others, shew how numerously books lie to his hand in this department of study; and many of these books are marked by the highest qualities of thought and expression, with which no young mind can come in contact without the utmost good.

In such studies let it be your aim not merely to accumulate facts, nor store your memories with details, but also to grasp principles. It is from lack of doing this that many minds turn away in weariness from scientific pursuits. They are repelled by needless particulars, whose interdependence and relation they fail to perceive. Most of the writers we have mentioned will help the student to a higher point of view than this. Most of them, moreover, will inspire him with the poetry as well as the utility of his subject. And this is a great gain. For youthful study advances under a spur of poetic enthusiasm more than anything else. Carry this enthusiasm with you into the study of nature. Learn to appreciate its beauties, to admire its harmonies, as you explore its secrets. This is surely the

natural result that should follow an increased acquaintance with scientific facts. The more nature is studied, the more should all its poetry appear.

As one has asked, who has defended somewhat extravagantly, but also eloquently and forcibly, the value of scientific education,* "Think you that a drop of water, which to the vulgar eye is but a drop of water, loses anything in the eye of the physicist, who knows that its elements are held together by a force which, if suddenly liberated, would produce a flash of lightning? Think you that what is carelessly looked upon by the uninitiated as a mere snow-flake does not suggest higher associations to one who has seen through a microscope the wondrously-varied and elegant forms of snow crystals? Think you that the rounded rock, marked with parallel scratches, calls up as much poetry in an ignorant mind as in the mind of a geologist, who knows that on this rock a glacier slid a million years ago? The truth is, that those who have never entered upon scientific pursuits are blind to most of the poetry by which they are surrounded. Whoever has not in youth collected plants and insects knows not half the halo of interest which lanes and hedgerows can assume. Whoever has not sought for fossils has little idea of the poetical associations that surround the

* Mr Herbert Spencer—Education, p. 46.

places where embedded treasures were found. Whoever at the sea-side has not had a microscope and aquarium have yet to learn what the highest pleasures of the sea-side are."

4. Books of Poetry and Fiction are the last class that we have enunciated. In many respects they are the most important. To some, indeed, it may seem that such books cannot compete in an educational point of view with the graver compositions of philosophy, history, and of science, of which we have been speaking. But this would be a narrow judgment. In every generation it will be found, on the contrary, that the works of what have been called belles lettres have exercised over the young a wide and more stimulating influence than almost any others. And naturally so. For it is the special aim of such works to idealise all that is most attractive in nature or in life to the young, to paint in the most vivid experiences the passions, feelings, and aspirations that animate and please them.

It becomes, therefore, so far as the young are concerned, a most important consideration of what quality the poetic and fictitious literature of their time may be. They *will* read it. It is needless to declaim against novel-reading, or try to thwart it. All such attempts betray a narrow ignorance of human nature, and, above all, of youthful human nature. The nursery tale, and

the fascinated fireside that draws around it, might teach such ignorant moralists a higher lesson. The truth is, that the mind of the child—of the boy—of the youth—craves as one of its most natural interests fictitious or ideal representations of human life and character, of events in intricate and marvellous combination. Holding as yet but slackly to reality, and imperfectly comprehending the entangled panorama of the social world around, it is a true education as well as a delightful amusement for it to study human nature in the mimic scenes of the novelist or the poet.

It can never, therefore, avail to indulge in polemic, religious or otherwise, against novel-reading. In excess or misdirected, such reading is hurtful, and even dangerous, to moral principle, as well as intellectual strength; but any other sort of reading would be also more or less hurtful if excessive and ill directed. The cure for this is not abstinence, but regulation. Fiction will be always an important and exciting element of education—to the young especially so; and the great matter here and everywhere should be to guide their taste, and not vainly to try to extinguish it.

To every Christian parent and teacher it should be a source of unfeigned congratulation that our modern light literature is of such an improved character. It may not only be read

for the most part with impunity by the young, but is fitted in many respects to form a high and valuable discipline for them. If any one wishes to measure the change that has taken place in it, he has only to turn to the most characteristic fiction and poetry of the last century, and see what a different spirit animates them. It is not only that we miss in them the same positive character of good, but that we meet everywhere with positive elements of evil. The moral spirit is not only not pure, but is sometimes corrupted to an extent that makes us shrink from contact with works which in the rare power and charm of their genius have become immortal. Notwithstanding their varied excellences, their vigour and robustness of thought, the grace, felicity, and finish of their style, their bright and ingenious wit, and sparkling, easy-hearted gaiety, there are many of the most notable of these works seriously not fit for youthful perusal—so deeply poisoned are they with the taint of grossness and defiling insinuation. And even where this is not the case, there is little that is morally elevating or noble in the fictitious writings of the last century. Life as a whole—in its complete conception of a moral reality, struggling with difficulties and beset by temptations, and victorious by principle—is but feebly represented. The main struggle is that of passion—the main interest that of intrigue—all

centred round a narrow and comparatively low conception of life. The Clarissas and Lovelaces, the Leonoras and Horatios, the crowd of Belindas, Celindas, and Eugenias, and even the hearty and courteous pleasantry of Sir Roger de Coverley, and the well-meant fun of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., are but one-sided and inadequate representations. Piquant and interesting as they may be, no one would say the young could get much good of any kind from the study of them. It is in the main fashionable comedy or the mere tragedy of lower passion.

Our present literature presents a marked contrast to these characteristics. It is informed with a deeper feeling, and altogether a more sacred, a higher idea of life. It is, in fact, matter for criticism that our fiction has trespassed too obviously on ethical and religious grounds, and sought to point its moral too obtrusively, instead of merely "holding up the mirror" to all that is most beautiful and earnest in human faith and life. This is a casual excess —the recoil of the spring after having been depressed unduly. The advantage is unequivocal in a moral, whatever it may be in an artistic, point of view. All that is most characteristic and excellent in our present fiction we unhesitatingly commend to the perusal of the young. There is a pervading presence of good in it—the reflection of a spirit that loves the

good and hates the evil. The follies and vices of society are exposed by a Thackeray with a pencil which borrows none of its powers or piquancy from contact with the degradation which it paints. The kindly spirit, warming to what is noble and self-sacrificing, rejoicing in what is tender and true, everywhere looks from beneath the caustic touches of the satirist, or the dark colours of the artist.* In our most familiar sketches and caricatures there may be sometimes feebleness, but there is never pruriency; a free, yet delicate handling pervades them, exciting laughter without folly, and warranting their introduction into families without fear of starting a blush on the most modest cheek, or exciting the least questionable emotion.

Looking to the moral effect of our modern poetry and fiction upon the young, there is nothing more deserving of commendation than the increased spirit of human sympathy for which they are remarkable. The literature of the last age was especially defective in this respect. It lacked genial tenderness or earnest sympathy for human suffering and wrong. Its very pathos was hard and artificial. It wept over imaginary sorrows; it rejoiced in merely sentimental triumphs. In contrast to this, the poetry and fiction of our time

* This, we are sorry to say, is scarcely true of some of Mr Thackeray's recent delineations—such as "Lovel the Widower."

concern themselves closely with the common sorrows and joys of the human heart. The pages of Dickens and Kingsley, and Miss Mulock and Mrs Gaskell, and Mrs Oliphant and George Eliot, are all intensely realistic. A deep-thoughted tenderness for human miseries, and a high aspiration after human improvement, animate all of them. It is impossible to read their novels without having our moral sentiments acutely touched and drawn forth. The same is eminently true of the poetry of Mr Tennyson, Mrs Browning, and others. It is almost more than anything characterised by a spirit of impassioned philanthropy, of intense yearning over worldly wrong and error, "ancient forms of party strife," and of lofty longing after a higher good than the world has yet known—

"Sweeter manners, purer laws,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand."

It is impossible for the young to love such poetry and to study it without a kindling in them of something of the same affectionate interest in human welfare and aspiration after human improvement.

In both our fiction and poetry, life is presented if not in its fully sacred reality, yet as an earnest conflict with actual toils and duties and trials—a varied movement, neither of frivolity nor profligacy, (as in so much of our older imaginative literature,) but of work and

passion, of mirth and sorrow, of pure affection and every-day trial. The picture is realised by all as true and kindred. It comes home to us, moving us with a deeper indignation at wrong, or a holier tenderness for suffering, or a higher admiration of those simple virtues of gentleness, and love, and long-suffering, which, more than all heroic deeds, make life beautiful, and purify and brighten home. A literature thus true to the highest interests of humanity—seeking its worthiest inspiration and most touching pictures in the common life we all live—in the darkness and the light there are in all human hearts, the wrongs and sufferings, the joys and griefs, the struggles and heroisms that are everywhere around us;—such a literature has a seed of untold good in it, and, forming as it does the chief mental food of thousands of young men, it must help to develop virtue, and strengthen true, and generous, and Christian principle. It is such a literature, although in still grander and more sacred proportions, that Milton pictured to himself in one of his splendid passages:—"These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God, rarely bestowed, but yet to some (though most obscure) in every nation; and are of power, beside the office of a pulpit, to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility; to allay the perturbations of the mind, and to set the

affections on a right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what He works and what He suffers to be wrought with high providence in His Church; to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints; the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ; to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship. Whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave, whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fiction from without, or the only subtleties and reflexes of man's thought from within—all these things with a solid and tractable smoothness to point out and describe—teaching over the whole book of sanctity, through all the instances of example, with such delight to those especially of soft and delicious temper, who will not so much as look upon truth herself unless they see her elegantly dressed: that whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear now rugged and difficult, though they indeed be easy and pleasant, they will then appear to all men both easy and pleasant, though they were rugged and difficult indeed."

It is unnecessary for us to try to point out further those works in our modern poetry and fiction which deserve the attention of young

men. Of course, they will read what is most popular and interesting. There is one writer, however, neither a poet nor a novelist, and yet in some respects both, whom we feel urged to commend to their study—the author of "Friends in Council," "Essays written in the Intervals of Business," and "Companions of my Solitude," &c. These volumes are charming, at once for their literary finish, their genial earnestness, and their thoughtful, ethical spirit. A vivid sense of the sacred power of duty; a quiet, glancing humour, which lights up every topic with grace and variety; a shrewd knowledge of the world and its ways, tinged with sadness, pervade them, and are fitted to render them eminently impressive and improving to the young and book-loving. They invite by their easy, genial, and attractive style; they inform, instruct, and discipline by their broad and observant wisdom, and the wide intelligence and keen love of truth with which they discuss many important questions.

We should further urge upon young men the necessity of extending their studies in the lighter departments of literature beyond their own age. They must and will read mainly, as we have supposed, the fiction and poetry of their time, but in order to get any adequate culture from this sort of reading they must do something more. They must study English

poetry in its successive epochs, ascending by such stages as are represented by the great names of Wordsworth, and Cowper, and Dryden, and Milton, and Shakspeare, and Spenser. To study thoroughly the great works of any of these poets, especially of Wordsworth, or Milton, or Shakspeare, or Spenser, is a lasting educational gain. Any youth who spends his leisure over the pages of the "Excursion," or the "Paradise Lost," or the "Fairy Queen," or the higher dramas of Shakspeare, is engaged in an important course of intellectual discipline. And if you would wish to know the charms of literary delight in their full freedom and acquisition, you must have often recourse to these great lights of literature, and seek to kindle your love for "whatsoever hath passion or admiration" at the flame of their genius.

Altogether it is evident what a wide field of study is before every young man who loves books, and would seek to improve himself by their study. The field is only too wide and varied, were it not that different tastes will seek different parts of it, and leave the rest comparatively alone. Whatever part you may select, devote yourself to it. If history, or science, or belles lettres be your delight, read with a view not merely to pass the time, but really to cultivate and advance your intellectual life. The

mere dilettante will never come to anything. Read whatever you read with enthusiasm, with a generous yet critical sympathy. Make it your own. Take it up by lively and intelligent application at every point into your own mental system, and assimilate it. This is not to be done without pains. Many never attain to it. And so they read, and continue to read, and find no good. They are no wiser nor better after than before, simply because they read mechanically. They have a sense of duty in the matter which prescribes the allotted task, but they do not take care that the task be interesting as well as imperative. An active interest, however, is a condition of all mental improvement. The mind only expands or strengthens when it is fairly awakened. Give to all your reading an awakened attention, a mind alive and hungering after knowledge, and whether you read history, or poetry, or science, or theology, or even fiction of a worthy kind, it will prove to you a mental discipline, and bring you increase of wisdom.

PART IV.

RECREATION.

I.

HOW TO ENJOY.

EVERY life that is at all healthy and happy must have its enjoyments as well as its duties. It cannot bear the constant strain of grave occupation without losing something of its vitality and sinking into feebleness. Asceticism may have construed life as an unceasing routine of duty—of work done for some grave or solemn purpose. But asceticism has neither produced the best work nor the noblest lives of which our world can boast. In its effort to elevate human nature, it has risen at the highest to a barren grandeur. It has too often relapsed into moral weakness or perversity. Human nature, as a

prime condition of health, must recreate itself—must have its moments of unconscious play, when it throws off the burden of work, and rejoices in the mere sensation of its own free activity.

And youth must especially have such opportunities of recreation. It thirsts for them—it is all on the alert to catch them; and if denied to it, it dwindles from its proper strength, or pursues illegitimate and hurtful gratifications. A young man without the love of amusement is an unnatural phenomenon; and an education that does not provide for recreation as well as study would fail of its higher end from the very exclusiveness with which it aims to reach it.

Yet it must be admitted that the subject of recreation is one attended with peculiar difficulties. Not, indeed, so long as youth remains at school, and under the guidance of external authority. It is then little more than a matter of games and healthy exercise, in which the animal spirits are chafed into pleasant excitement, and the physical frame hardened into healthy vigour. The proportion which such school recreation should bear to school work—the best modes of it—the games which are best fitted for youth in its different stages—and the organisation necessary to give them their happiest effect—are all points which may require attention, or involve some discussion. But

the peculiar difficulties of the subject do not emerge so far. It is only when youth has outgrown the scholastic age, and begun life on its own account—when it has tasted the freedom and the power of opening manhood—that recreation is felt to run closely alongside of temptation, and that the modes and measures in which it should be indulged are found to involve considerations of a very complex and delicate character.

Neither here nor anywhere is it the intention of the writer to lay down formal rules, but rather to suggest principles. Nothing, probably, less admits of definite and unvarying rules than amusement. Its very nature is to be somewhat free from rule. It is the gratification of an impulse, and not the following out of a plan. To lay down plans of amusement is to contradict the very instinct out of which it springs, and to convert recreation into work. No man, certainly, can be kept safe from harm by enclosing himself in a palisade of rules, and allowing himself to enjoy this, and refusing to enjoy that. Moral confusion, and, consequently, weakness, is more likely to come from such a course as this than anything else. The best and the only effectual guide we can have is that of a rightly-constituted heart, which can look innocently abroad upon life, and which, fixed in its main principles and tendencies, is comparatively heed-

less of details. It is from within, and not from without—from conscience, and not from law, that our highest monition must come. Young men must seek freedom from temptation in the strength of a Divine communion that guards them from evil. This is primary. Secondarily, there are certain outward occasions of temptations which it may be incumbent upon them to avoid, and to which we shall give a few words in another chapter.

Primarily and essentially, the heart must be rightly fixed in order to innocent enjoyment. Nothing else will avail. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do," says the apostle, "do all to the glory of God." There is a profound significance in this text. Our lives, not merely in some points or relations, but in all points and relations, must be near to God. Not merely in our solemn moods, or our grave occupations, but in our ordinary actions, our moments of enjoyment, our eating and drinking, (the emblematic acts of enjoyment,) must we recognise and own the presence of God. The grand idea of the glory of God, and the most common aspects of life, are in immediate relation to one another.

And this points to an essential and distinguishing characteristic of Christianity. It is no mere religion of seasons or places; it is no mere

series of things to be believed, nor of duties to be done; it rests upon the one, and prescribes the other; but it is more characteristically than either a new spirit and life pervading the whole moral and mental activities, and colouring and directing them at every point. The Christian is brought within the blessed sphere of a Divine communion that animates all his being. From the happy centre of reconciliation with God, there goes forth in him a life—it may be very imperfect, answering but feebly to its own aspirations, yet a life touched in all its energies with a Divine quickening, and bearing on all a Divine impress. In such a life there is and can be nothing unrelated to God. Awful thought as the glory of God is, so soon as the soul is turned into the light of the Divine love, that glory is ever near at hand, and not afar off to it. There is nothing common nor unclean to the Christian. He cannot lead two lives; he cannot serve the world with the flesh, and serve God with the spirit. He may often do this in point of fact. The law in his members may prove too strong for the better law of his mind, and bring him into captivity to the law of sin and death in his members. But all this is in contradiction to the ideal of the Christian life; it is in no respect reconcileable with it. In its conception, it is a whole and not a part—a whole consecrated to God—a living, breathing, har-

monious reality, all whose aspirations are Godward.

It is clear that to such a Christian the question of enjoyment will not present itself so much in detail as in principle. His first concern will be not what he should do or not do—whether he should court this amusement or reject it, take this liberty or deny himself it; but what he is—whether he is indeed within the sphere of Divine communion and sharing in its blessing. He will not seek to mould his life from the outside, but to give free play and scope to the Divine Spirit strong within him, that it may animate every phase of his activity, and sanctify all that he does.

If any young man asks, how he is to enjoy himself, in what way he may yield to those instincts of his nature which crave for amusement, he must first ask himself the serious question, Whether he is right at heart? Has he chosen the good? Unless there is a settlement of this previous question, the other can scarcely be said to have any place. For if God is not in all his life, it must be of little practical consequence to him whether one enjoyment be more or less dangerous than another. Everything is dangerous, because undivine to him. He sees God nowhere. The light of the Divine glory rests on nothing to him; and the most noble work, therefore, no less than the most trivial amusement, may serve to harden his heart and

leave him more godless than before. But again, if he has settled this prime question, and chosen the good, then he will carry with him into all his indulgences the Spirit of the good. That Spirit will ward off evil from him, and guard him in temptation, and guide him in difficulty. He will not be scrupulous or afraid of this or that; but he will take enjoyment as it comes, and as his right. He will feel it to be a little thing to be judged of man's judgment, and yet he will be careful not to offend his brother. All things may be lawful to him, but all things will not be expedient. He will use a wise discretion—refraining where he might indulge, using his liberty without abusing it, eating whatsoever is set before him, asking no questions; and yet when questions are started, obviously sincere, and arising out of moral scruples, he will abstain rather than give offence. He will have, in short, a wise discernment of good and evil, a tact of judgment which will guide him far better than any mere outward rules.

The question, How to enjoy? is therefore in its right sense always a secondary, never a primary question. It comes after the question of duty, and never before it; and where the main question is rightly resolved, the secondary one becomes comparatively easy of solution. Principle first: Play afterwards. And if there be the root of right principle in us, we will not, need not,

trouble ourselves minutely as to modes of amusement. We will take enjoyment with a free and ample hand, if it be granted to us. We will know how to want it, if it be denied to us. We will know both how to be abased and how to abound; and in whatever state we are, therein learn, like the great apostle, to be content.

Of one thing we may be sure. Enjoyment in itself is meant to be a right and blessing, and not a snare. This is a very important truth for the young to understand. Life is open to them; amusement is free to them. They are entitled to live freely and trustfully, and enjoy all—if only the sense of duty and of God remain with them—if only they do not forget that for all these things God will bring them into judgment. Under this proviso they may taste of enjoyment as liberally as their natures crave, and their opportunities offer. To preach anything else to the young, is neither true in itself nor can possibly be good to them. To teach them to be afraid of enjoyment, is to make them doubtful of their own natural and healthy instincts; and as these instincts remain, nevertheless, and constantly reassert their power, it is to introduce an element of hurtful perplexity into their life. They are urged on by nature; they are held back by authority. And if the rein of the outward law imposed upon them once break, they are plunged

into darkness. They have no guide. It is vain to enter into this struggle with nature: it is cruel and wrong to do it. Nature must have play, and is to be kept within bounds by its own wise training, and the development of a higher spirit within, and not by mere dictation and arbitrary compulsion from without.

There is no point, perhaps, upon which education of every kind more frequently fails than upon this very point—the education which we give ourselves, as well as that which others give us, in youth. For it is a mistake to suppose, as we have hinted in a former chapter, that the sole or perhaps the chief danger of young men is, that they are too indulgent to themselves. Many are so. Many unthinking youths may so give the rein to nature in its lower sense that every high and pure impulse is destroyed in them. But of those who are capable of thought, and who aim at self-culture, not a few are more likely to break down in their aims from striving after too much than too little. They are apt to gird themselves with rules, and to lay artificial yokes upon the free development of their nature, rather than to yield too much to its own elastic impulses. They become very stern theorists some of these young men, and they look on life with a hard and dogmatic assurance, parcelling out with a formal and ignorant hand the good and evil in it. They are wise

as to the kinds of enjoyment, and rigidly carry out their own maxims, as well as seek to enforce them upon others.

This is not the spirit from which there ever groweth a fine and noble character in a young man. It lacks the first essential of all youthful nobleness—modesty—the freshness of a trustful docility. The chance is that it breaks down altogether in its theoretic confidence, as experience proves too strong for it; or that it matures into a narrow fanaticism which misinterprets both life and religion, and proves at once a misery to itself and a nuisance to others. Ascetic formality is the refuge of a weak moral nature, or the wretchedness of a strong one. How far even a noble mind may sink under it,—to what depths of despairing imbecility and almost impiety it may reach,—we have only to study the austerities of Pascal to see. We are told that "Pascal would not permit himself to be conscious of the relish of his food; he prohibited all seasonings and spices, however much he might wish for and need them; and he actually died because he forced the diseased stomach to receive at each meal a certain amount of aliment, neither more nor less, whatever might be his appetite at the time, or his utter want of appetite. He wore a girdle armed with iron spikes, which he was accustomed to drive in upon his body (his fleshless

ribs) as often as he thought himself in need of such admonition.' He was annoyed and offended if any in his hearing might chance to say that they had just seen a beautiful woman. He rebuked a mother who permitted her own children to give her their kisses. Towards a loving sister, who devoted herself to his comfort, he assumed an artificial harshness of manner for the *express purpose*, as he acknowledged, of revolting her sisterly affection."

And all this sprung from the simple principle that earthly enjoyment was inconsistent with religion. Once admit this principle, and there is no limit to the abject and unhappy consequences that may be drawn from it. The mind, thrown off any dependence upon its own instincts, is cast into the arms of some blind authority or dogmatism which tyrannises over it, reducing it more frequently to weakness than bracing it up to endurance and heroism.

No doubt it will be the impulse of every Christian man, and it ought no less to be so of every Christian youth, to "rejoice with trembling." While he hears the voice saying to him, on the one hand, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes;" he will not forget the voice that says to him, on the other

hand, "But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." The voices are one, in fact; and if he is wise he will acknowledge their unity, and be sober in his very mirth, and temper the hour of cheerfulness with the thought of responsibility. There is something in the heart itself, even in the heart of the young, that intimates this as the true mean. There is often a monition of warning in the very moment of mirth. The joy is well. It is the natural expression of a healthy and well-ordered frame; it leaps up to meet the opportunity as the lark to greet the morn. The movement of nature is as clear in the one case as in the other; yet there is a background of moral consciousness lying behind the human instinct, and always ready to cast the shadows of thought—of reflective responsibility over it. Rejoice, it says; but rejoice like one who is a moral being, and whose primary law, therefore, is not enjoyment, but duty.

Moreover, there is that which immediately reminds us of the same truth in the result which follows all excess of enjoyment. The tide of feeling, when it rises to an unwonted height of joyful elation—certainly when it allows itself to be carried away by mere thoughtless and boisterous impulse—almost invariably returns upon itself, collapses in reaction and exhaustion. Our constitution contains within itself, a check

to all undue excitement. This check is, no doubt, often ineffectual, but it is so at the expense of the constitution, and the very capacity of enjoyment which may overtask itself. This capacity wastes by excessive use. Of nothing may the young man be more sure than this. If he will rejoice without thought and without care in the days of his youth, he will leave but little power of enjoyment for his manhood or old age. If he keep the flame of passion burning, and plunge into excitement after excitement in his heyday, there will be nothing but feebleness and exhaustion in his maturity. He cannot spend his strength, and have it too. He cannot drink of every source of pleasure, and have his taste uncloyed, and his thirst fresh as at the first.

There is need here of a special caution in a time like ours. There are young men who now-a-days exhaust pleasure in their youth. The comparative freedom of modern life encourages an earlier entrance into the world, and an earlier assumption of manly manners and habits than was wont to be. Pleasure is cheaper and more accessible—the pleasure of travel, pleasure of many kinds; and it is no uncommon thing to find young men who have run the round of manly pleasure before they have well attained to man's estate, and who are *blasé* with the world before the time that

their fathers had really entered into it. There may not be many of those for whom these pages are chiefly written of this class; but something of the same tendency exists among all classes of the young. They all attain sooner to the rights of manhood, and the premature use of these rights becomes an abuse. To mention nothing else, the prevalence of smoking among the young is an illustration of what we mean. Even should it be admitted that this habit can be practised in moderation with impunity, and as a legitimate source of pleasure by the full-grown man, it must be held to be altogether inappropriate to the young. The youthful frame can stand in no need of any stimulating or sedative influence it may impart. The overworked brain or the overtasked physical system may receive no injury, or may even receive some benefit—we do not profess to give any opinion on the subject—from an indulgence which is absolutely pernicious to the fresh, healthy, and still developing constitution. And that smoking is an indulgence of this class cannot be doubted. Granting it to be a permissible enjoyment, it is not so to the young. So far as they are concerned, it involves in its very nature the idea of excess. Their physical constitution should contain within itself the abundant elements of enjoyment. If healthy and unabused, it no doubt does so; and the application of a nar-

cotic like tobacco is nothing else than a violent interference with its free and natural action.

The avoidance of all excess is a golden rule in enjoyment. It may be a hard, and in certain cases an impossible rule to the young. In the abundance of life there is a tendency to overflow; and when the young heart is big with excited emotion it seems vain to speak of moderation. Every one, probably, will be able to recall hours when, amid the competitive gladness of school or college companions the impulses of enjoyment seemed to burst all bounds, and ran into the most riotous excitement; and in the reminiscences of such hours there may be the charm as of a long-lost pleasure never to be felt again; but if the memory be fairly interrogated, it will be found that even then there was a drawback—some latent dissatisfaction and weariness, or something worse, that grew out of the very height or overplus of that rapturous enjoyment. As a great humorist* has said—

"E'en the bright extremes of joy
Bring on conclusions of disgust."

Assuredly the most durable and the best pleasures are all tranquil pleasures. And it is just one of the lessons which change the sanguine anticipations of youth into the sober experience of manhood that the true essence of attainable enjoyment is not in bursts of excitement, but in

* Thomas Hood.

the moderate flow of healthy and happy, because well-ordered, emotion.

As we set out by saying, it is impossible to regard this or any other element of life apart from religion. To many no doubt it seems widely separated from it. The very name of recreation calls up to them ideas with which they would think it an absurdity or even an impiety to associate religion. The latter is a solemnity—the former is a frivolity, or festivity—and each is to be kept in its proper place. To speak of religion having anything to do with the amusements or enjoyments of the young would appear to such to be the wildest absurdity. Yet it is a true, and, from a right point of view only, the most sober, judgment, that the spirit of religion must pervade every aspect of life—that there is no part of our activity can be fully separated from it. We must be Christian in our enjoyments as in everything. The young man must carry with him into his recreations not merely feelings of honour, but the feelings of justice, purity, truth, and tenderness that become the gospel. He must do this, if he be a Christian at all. At least, in so far as he does not do this, he does discredit to his Christian profession. He fails to realise and exemplify it in its full meaning.

It is this upon which we must fall back here

and everywhere. It is the spirit of the gospel to rejoice, and yet to do so with sobriety; to rejoice where God fills the heart with gladness—where opportunity and companionship invite to mirth and cheerfulness; and yet to be sober when we think how fleeting all joy is—how soon the clouds and darkness follow the glad sunshine—how many are dwelling in the "house of mourning"—what a shadow of death and of judgment encompasses all human life. To be cheerful and yet to be sober-minded—to laugh when it is a time for laughter—to have no gloom in our heart, and yet to have no wantonness in it—but to be "pitiful and courteous" towards others' sorrow, should God spare ourselves from it,—this is the right spirit, truly Christian—truly human, (the latter because it is the former.) It may seem sufficiently simple of attainment; but its very simplicity makes its difficulty. There is nothing notable in it—only the harmony of a healthy, Christian soul. It is by no means easy of reach, but by God's help it may in some measure be the portion of all who will humbly learn His truth and follow His will.

II.

WHAT TO ENJOY.

YOUTH must have its recreations. Enjoyment must mingle largely in the life of every healthy young man—enjoyment liberal yet temperate. The general proposition does not admit of reasonable dispute; but when we descend to details, and consider the particular forms of enjoyment which the world offers to young men, we find ourselves very soon surrounded with difficulties. Recreation becomes a complex question, in which good is greatly mingled with evil; and some of its most familiar forms have long been, and probably will long remain subjects of vehement argument.

Especially does argument arise in reference to the very period of life which we are contemplating. In younger years, or again in older years, the difficulty is less urgent, or at least it solves itself more readily. The inexperience of mere boyhood protects it from the evil that may be seductive to the young man; and again the experience of mature years is so far a preservative from the same evil. The boy has not yet reached the age of action or of self-choice in the matter; the man of experience has already formed his practical philosophy of life, and taken the direction of his conduct into his own hands beyond the control of advice from any other. The difficulty lies in the main before the young man who is forming his philosophy of life: how he shall act in reference to certain forms of worldly enjoyment—how far these are consistent with a Christian character—how far the element of temptation mingled up in them should deter him from participation in them—how far the element of good in them may claim the recognition of his free reason and independent judgment.

Before passing to the consideration of this difficulty, however, there are certain forms of recreation so obviously and undeniably legitimate as to claim from us a few words of recommendation.

The active sports of boyhood may be, and as

far as possible should be, carried into early manhood. Cricket, or foot-ball, or golf, or whatever game carries the young man into the open air, braces his muscles, and strengthens his health, and procures the merry-hearted companionship of his fellows, should be indulged in without stint, so far as his opportunities will permit, and the proper claims of business or of study justify. The primary claims of both of these are of course everywhere presumed by us. We have only in view those who pursue such games as recreations. Those who pursue them to the neglect or disadvantage of higher claims upon their time, may of course turn them, as they may turn all things, into occasions of evil.

Our meaning simply is, that viewing such games in their proper character, as sources of enjoyment for the leisure hours of youth, they are of an absolutely innocent and beneficial character. They subserve in the highest degree the purposes of enjoyment by exercising pleasurably the physical system, stimulating the animal spirits, and calling forth the feelings of fair and honourable rivalry, of earnest and unconceding yet courteous competition.

The healthy enjoyment of these sports might be the subject of extended description, but this would lead us away from our task. Those who prize and enjoy them, do not need any such

description, and others would not be much the better of it. It cannot be too strongly borne in mind that this enjoyment is to some extent a moral as well as a physical gain. Moral and physical health, especially in youth, are intimately connected; and whatever raises the animal spirits without artificially exciting them, and stimulates the nervous energy without wasting it, is preservative of virtue, as well as conducive to bodily strength. The happy abandonment of cricket or foot-ball, the more steady yet equally keen excitement of golf, leave their traces in the higher as well as in the lower nature; and, if well used, they are really instruments of education as well as amusement.

There is another class of amusements to which young men may freely betake themselves as they have opportunity—shooting and fishing. Both are time-honoured, and both, if not free from temptation—as nothing is—are yet so surrounded with healthful associations as to claim almost unqualified approval. There are, no doubt, questions—and questions not very easy of answer—that may be raised in reference to both these modes of recreation. It seems strange, and in certain moods of our moral consciousness indefensible, that man should seek and find enjoyment in the destruction of innocent and happy life around him. It is strange

and puzzling that it should be so; and if we think merely of the end of such sports, and try reflectively to realise them, we are not aware of any satisfactory trains of argument by which they can be clearly defended. But the truth is, there are not a few things in life which conscience practically allows, and sense justifies; yet which are scarcely capable of reflective vindication. They are not subjects of argument, and argument only becomes ridiculous and futile when applied therein. They answer to strong and healthy instincts in us—instincts given us by God, and which therefore justify their objects when legitimately sought. But the objects looked at by themselves have little or nothing to commend them to the reason or moral judgment. The destruction of animal life in sport seems to be such an object. Viewed by itself it has nothing to commend it; it seems almost shocking to speak of sport in connexion with it; yet instinct and sense not only justify such sport, but approve of it as among the healthiest recreations that we can pursue. Any man who would argue against either shooting or fishing because of the cruelty they seem to involve, is regarded as an amiable enthusiast to whom it is useless to make any reply. Supposing he has all the argument on his side from his point of view, sportsmen see the thing from an entirely different point of view, and while they do not

care to dispute the argument, they go their way quite unimpressed by it, and strong in the feeling that their way is in the highest degree justifiable.

It is not the destruction of animal life which they directly contemplate. On the contrary, when this destruction is secured and made easy, as sometimes happens, it is rightly said that there is no sport. It is the healthful exercise, the ready skill, the risks, the adventure, the "chase," in short, rather than the "game" that they regard. The sportsman, as he sets out, thinks of the breezy morn, or the open day—the crisp and bracing air—the walk through the fields or by the stream—the excitement of the search—the happy adventures with which he will attain his object—the pleasure of success—the pleasure even should he fail. His mind dwells upon every pleasing accessory, and the idea of pain to the destroyed animals seldom or never occurs to him.

It is a singular enough fact that angling, which to the reflective imagination can certainly vindicate itself as little as shooting, has come to be esteemed as a peculiarly gentle and innocent amusement. Anglers are all of a "gentle craft," and a quiet, pensive, peaceful, harmless, happy air—breathed from the spirit of old Izaak Walton, and long before he lived to symbolise it—is supposed to rest upon their pursuit. Nothing

can shew more strikingly how completely it is the accessories, and not the end, of this amusement that common sense and traditionary feeling contemplate. It were vain to say that common sense and traditionary feeling are wrong. Beyond doubt they are right on such a subject. The subject is one which belongs to their province, and not to the province of logic. And even if the logician should find himself driven to argue it from an opposite point of view, he would probably be found in his practice, and certainly in his ordinary moods of feeling, contradicting his own argument.

In addition to such out-door amusements, there are various forms of in-door amusement which claim some notice. It is more difficult to find in-door amusements for young men, for the simple reason that healthy and happy exercise is the idea which is chiefly associated with, and chiefly legitimates recreation on their part. And the open air is the natural place for such exercise. Yet in-door amusements must also be found. Music is one of the chief of these amusements, and certainly one of the most innocent and elevating.

Of all delights, to those who have the gift or taste for it, music is the most exquisite. To affix the term amusement to it is perhaps scarcely fair. It is always more than this when

duly appreciated. Luther ranked it as a science next in order to theology. "Whoever despises music," he said, "as is the case with all fanatics, with him I can never agree; for music is a gift of God, and not a discovery of man. It keeps Satan at a distance; and, by making a man happy, he loses all anger, pride, and every other vice. After theology, I give music the second rank and highest honour; and we see how David, together with all the saints, have expressed their thoughts in verse, in rhyme, and in song. Most of all, I approve these two recreations and amusements—namely, music, and chivalrous exercises, with fencing, wrestling, &c.; the first chasing away the cares of the heart and melancholy thoughts, the other beneficial in exercising and improving the limbs, and keeping the body in health."

So Luther, with that manly and healthy instinct which always characterises him. He loved music himself, and always found a solace in it; and every sympathetic, and tender, and beautiful nature will do the same. It is a charm not only in itself, but a charm to keep us from idle and frivolous amusements. While stealing the senses by its soft witchery, or stirring them by its brilliant mystery, it awakens, at the same time, the most hidden fountains of intellectual feeling, so that under its spell, more than at any other time, we feel

"Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither;—
Can in a moment travel thither—
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

There is no other recreation, if this be the proper name for it at all, which is so purely intellectual. Other amusements, many games, may exercise the intellect, and even largely draw forth its powers of forethought, of decision and readiness; but music appeals to the soul in those deeper springs which lie close to spiritual and moral feeling. It lifts it out of the present and visible into the future and invisible. Even in its gayer and lighter strains it often does this, as well as in its more solemn and sacred chants. The simple lilt of a song which we have heard in youth, or which reminds us of home and country — some fragment of melody slight in meaning, yet exquisitely touching in sweet or pathetic wildness—will carry the soul into a higher region, and make a man feel kindred with the immortals.

"O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live;
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!"

A joy so precious as this, and which may minister to such high ends, is one which we are bound to cultivate in every manner, and for

which we are warranted in seeking the fullest indulgence. The concert, the oratorio, the opera, are all, from this point of view, to be commended. It appears impossible to make any absolute distinction between these forms of musical entertainment, and to say that the concert and perhaps the oratorio are commendable, but not so the opera. Such distinctions have their root in the same confusion of ideas in which many current moral and religious commonplaces take their rise. The pieces of music performed at the concert are nothing else in great part but detached fragments from the great operatic masterpieces. And what is the opera but the attempt to realise in a more complete form the dramatic and lyric play of passion, in which all song and music have their origin? While the opera is thus defensible in its essential character, it is at the same time—on account of the high and expensive art which it always involves—free from the degrading accessories which too often surround the theatre. The fact of operatic performances occurring in a place called a theatre is not, we presume, a consideration which can affect any sensible mind.

The oratorio stands somewhat by itself. It is in its very profession sacred music; and many who would shrink from all contact with the opera, are delighted to go to the oratorio, and to find at once their taste indulged, and

their conscience soothed, in listening to its solemn and majestic, or pensive and pathetic music. Others, again, have gone the length of recognising a peculiar offence in the very religious character of the oratorio. That such music should be performed by those who have no religious character—that it should be sought mainly as an amusement, under the same impulse that any other public entertainment is sought—are points that some clergymen have not scrupled to urge in condemnation of oratorios. All that need be said in reply to such views is, that they are not more illogical than they are unfair, and therefore unchristian. The very same views might be urged against religious worship. This worship is, no doubt, sometimes conducted by those who have no true religious character; and there are those who join in it from no higher motive than to distract the time, and because they have nothing else to do. The truth is, that all such judgments, where we can have no means of ascertaining the real state of the case, are grossly uncharitable. They savour of a spirit the very opposite of His who said, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged." We have nothing to do with such things. The music which thrills with its awful earnestness—its tones of adoration or of deprecation—may proceed from a dead or cold, or from a deeply-touched or pious heart. We cannot

tell; no more than we can tell whether the eloquent preacher of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," speaks from the fulness of a faithful, or the mere readiness of a fluent, tongue. It is our business to look to our own hearts, and see what good we get from such opportunities of good. Such music is truly, as Luther says, "a gift of God to us, and not a discovery of man." Let us improve the gift, and be thankful to the Giver.

As to the in-door amusements of which the game of billiards may be taken as the type, and the other class of amusements that follow, we feel at once that we are by no means on such secure ground as we have been treading. And yet it is not because we have passed into a different region of fact—because there is anything in such a game as billiards that is immoral, or in any sense illegitimate. On the contrary, it is impossible to conceive any game in itself more innocent. It admits of exquisite skill, calls forth subtle ingenuities of head and hand, and promotes free movement and exercise. Yet it is no less the case that we would not consider it a good but a bad sign of any young man that he spent his time in billiard-rooms. We do not even excuse the same devotion to billiards, or any such game, as we do to any of those out-door and more invigorating sports of which we

have spoken. We would infinitely rather see a young man fond of fishing, or shooting, or boating, or golf, or cricket, or any such sport, than we would see him fond of billiards. And yet billiard-playing is certainly in itself quite as innocent as any of these sports. Another proof, if any were needed, that the common sense and judgment take in not merely the essential character of any game or amusement, but its whole accessories, and these often more prominently and determinately than anything else. A devotion to billiard-playing in a young man is rightly held to imply an idle and luxurious nature, and to expose to chances of evil companionship, which may prove of fatal consequence. We cannot say to any young man, Do not play billiards—it is wrong to do so; because we have no warrant to make such a statement—no one has. To affirm that to be wrong, which is not in itself wrong, which may be practised with the most perfect innocence—with the most warrantable enjoyment—is a dogmatism of the worst kind, which can only breed that moral confusion in the minds of the young to which we have more than once adverted. And moral confusion is a direct parent of vice. When once the moral vision is clouded, and sees only in a maze, there is no security for right principle or consistent conduct. We do not venture to say this therefore. But we venture to say to every young man, It is not

good for you to indulge much in such an amusement. You can only do this at the expense of higher considerations. Many other amusements are better, more healthful in themselves, and more free from dangerous associations.

The love of *play* of any kind in the shape of billiards or cards, or anything else, is a hazardous, and may prove before you are well aware of it, a fatal passion. Whenever it begins to develop, you have passed the bounds of amusement; and to indulge in any games but for amusement is at once an infatuation and temptation of the worst kind. It is only the idea of amusement that sanctions such games. Dissociated from this idea, they become instruments of evil passion, to be repudiated by every good man. If you use them at all then, never abuse them. And use other games rather. They are better in themselves; they are safer in their effects.

In reference to the last class of amusements to which we pass—the theatre, dancing, and festive parties among yourselves—all we can say is very much of the same character as we have now said. These things are not necessarily evil, and we cannot take it upon us to say that they are. Yet they often lead to evil; and it is impossible, in the case of the theatre especially, as it has always existed and is likely to continue

to exist among us, not to feel that the young man who seeks his amusement there is courting dangers of the most seductive and fatal character. Why so? Not certainly that there is anything vicious in the representation of human passion and action upon the stage. Not surely that the drama is essentially vicious in its tendency, or sheds from it an immoral influence. On the contrary, the drama is in its idea noble and exalting —one of the most natural, and therefore most effective expressions of literary art. Who may not be made wiser and better by the study of Shakspeare's wonderful creations? In what human compositions rather than in his plays would a young man seek for the stimulus of high thoughts, and the excitement of lofty and heroic or gentle and graceful virtues? The stage in its true conception is a school of morals as well as of manners, in which the things that are excellent should commend themselves, and the things that are low and bad shew their own disgrace. There is no species of entertainment that can, according to its true idea, more completely vindicate itself than the theatre.

Luther felt this, and has dwelt upon it with his usual heartiness. "Plays," he says, "are to be allowed, because they are written in beautiful poetry, and characters are portrayed and represented by which the people are instructed, and every man is reminded and admonished of

his rank and office, what is becoming in a servant or due to a master, and an old man, and the station each should assume in society; nay, here is exhibited, as in a mirror, the splendour of dignities and offices, the responsibility of our duties, and how each one should conduct himself in his station and general behaviour. At the same time, the cunning artifices and deceptions of unprincipled villains are described and held up to view; likewise the duty of parents to their children, how they should educate their young people, and persuade them to marry at a proper time; and how the children should shew obedience to their parents. Circumstances are exhibited in plays the knowledge of which is generally useful—as for instance the interior government of a family, which can be learned only in or by representation of a married life. And Christians ought not to throw comedies aside, because there sometimes occur expressions not proper for every ear; for even the Bible itself might in this view be kept out of sight. Those objections, therefore, which are brought forward why Christians should be forbidden to read or perform plays, are feeble and groundless."

Clear and honest words, as all Luther's are. The argument is satisfactory and to the point. Dramatic representation is, in its idea, a competent minister of such high uses as he describes.

Yet it remains no less true that the theatre is not, in its actual accessories, as it exists among us, a school of morals. Is it not too frequently the reverse? Conceive the case of a young man, of good principles and unblemished character, carried by some of his companions, for the first time, to the theatre. Would the good or the evil influences be uppermost in such a case? Would the associations of the place—the late hours, the after entertainment—not cast into the shade any happier effects that might flow from what he heard or saw? Would any Christian parent contemplate, without uneasiness, a play-going fondness in his son? In point of fact, is such a fondness likely to lead to any good? Do the young men who most exhibit it, develop into earnest, or excellent, or useful characters? These questions, we fear, are too easily answered in the negative. And, therefore, while we think with Luther, we would add a caution to his words. The performance of plays is not to be reprobated—those who go this length will be found to have a most inadequate and narrow idea both of life and literature, and to belong to the "fanatics" with whom the great Reformer "could never agree;" but attendance upon the theatre is to be practised with moderation and caution. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." If

anywhere this wise rule of St Paul's applies, it is here. Young men may go to the theatre—may lawfully and innocently do so;* but it is not expedient that they do so often; it is not expedient that they go in groups of unguarded fellowship. The enjoyment is not in itself to be condemned; but temptation lies everywhere folded in its accessories. Temptation is to be shunned—the appearance of evil is to be avoided. The most excellent way of doing this is to go, when you do go to the theatre, with those whom you love and respect—with the members of your own family. In this manner all the accessory evils of the enjoyment are most completely disarmed, and all its highest good most effectually secured.

Dancing is to be indulged with the same limitations. None but a fanatic of the most gloomy description could impute any harm to the act of dancing in itself. Here, also, the bright-hearted Reformer (and yet he was often sad-hearted, too) lays down the principle. "The inquiry is made," he says, "if dancing is to be reckoned a sin. Whether among the Jews dancing was the custom, I do not indeed know; but since among us

* These remarks have been the subject of a good deal of criticism. We feel ourselves, after full reflection, unable to modify them. We cannot condemn the mere fact of attendance at the theatre, in any circumstances. And those who take up this position can only do so consistently on different principles from those which underlie all our views on the subject of "Recreation."

it is customary to invite guests to dine, to eat, and be merry, and also to dance, I do not see how this practice can be rejected. The abuse, however, must be avoided. That wickedness and sin are often the consequences, is not attributable to the act of dancing. If everything is done with decorum, you will be able to dance with your guests. Faith and love are not banished by dancing." No, indeed. And whatever natural amusement is consistent with the exercise of these virtues, is not to be banned by hard-hearted dogmatists. But abuse is to be carefully guarded against. Dancing too readily degenerates into dissipation — and innocent gaiety passes into frivolity—and the flutter of excited interest into the craving for artificial passion. All such extremes are evil—bad in themselves, and hurtful in their consequences.

In the same manner festive parties among yourselves, how light and genial and happy may they be! What feast of reason and flow of soul! What flash of wit and cannonade of argument may they call forth! What radiant sparks, the memory of which will never die out, but come back in the easy and humorous moments of an earnest and it may be a sad existence, and brighten up the past with the momentary coruscations of a departed brilliancy! What deep, hearty friendship may illuminate and beautify them! Yet we know that such gladsome mo-

ments are peculiarly akin to danger. Merriment may pass into wantonness, and legitimate indulgence into a riotous carouse. Moderation is the difficulty of youth in everything. Yet when the bounds of moderation are once passed, all the enjoyment is gone—recreation ceases.

"Mirth and laughter, and the song, and the dance, and the feast, and the wine-cup, with all the jovial glee which circulates around the festive board, are only proper to the soul at those seasons when she is filled with extraordinary gladness, and should wait until those seasons arrive in order to be partaken of wholesomely and well; but by artificial means to make an artificial excitement of the spirits is violently to change the law and order of our nature, and to force it to that to which it is not willingly inclined. Without such high calls and occasions, to make mirth and laughter is to belie nature, and misuse the ordinance of God. It is a false glare, which doth but shew the darkness and deepen the gloom. It is to wear out and dissipate the oil of gladness, so that, when gladness cometh, we have no light of joy within our souls, and look upon it with baleful eyes. It is not a figure, but a truth, that those who make those artificial merriments night after night have no taste for natural mirth, and are gloomy and morose until the revels of the table or the lights of the saloon bring them to life again. Nature is worsted by art—artificial fire is stolen,

but not from heaven, to quicken the pulse of life, and the pulse of life runs on with fevered speed, and the strength of man is prostrated in a few brief years, and old age comes over the heart when life should yet be in its prime. And not only is heaven made shipwreck of, but the world is made shipwreck of—not only the spiritual man quenched, but the animal man quenched, by such unseasonable and intemperate merrymakings."*

In all your enjoyments, therefore, be moderate. The principle that leads and regulates you must be from within. The more the subject of recreation is candidly and comprehensively looked at, the more it is studied in a spirit of sense and reason, the more difficult will it appear to lay down any external rules that shall make out its character and determine its indulgence. Everywhere the difficulty appears extreme, and all wise men will admit it to be so, when amusement is viewed merely from the outside. But look within, and set your heart right in the love of God and the faith of Christ, and difficulties will disappear. Your recreation will fit in naturally to your life. You will throw the evil from you, however near you may sometimes come to it, and you will get the good which few things in the world are without. The inner life in you will assimilate to the Divine everywhere, and return its own blessed and consecrating influence to all your work and all your amusements.

* Edward Irving.

CONCLUSION.

CONCLUSION

IT is well for the young man even in entering upon life, to remember its termination, and how swiftly and suddenly the end may come. "Here we have no continuing city." We are "strangers and pilgrims, as all our fathers were," and the road of life at its very opening may pass from under us, and ere we have well entered upon the enjoyments and work of the present, we may be launched into the invisible and future world that awaits us. At the best life is but a brief space. "It appeareth for a little moment, and then vanisheth away." It is but a flash out of darkness, soon again to return into darkness.

Or, as the old Saxon imagination conceived, it is like the swift flight of a bird from the night without, through a lighted chamber, filled with guests and warm with the breath of passion, back into the cold night again.* We stand, as it were, on a narrow "strip of shore, waiting till the tide, which has washed away hundreds of millions of our fellows, shall wash us away also into a country of which there are no charts, and from which there is no return." The image may be almost endlessly varied. The strange and singular uncertainty of life is a stock theme of pathos; but no descriptive sensibility can really touch all the mournful tenderness which it excites.

It is not easy for a young man, nor indeed for any man in high health and spirits, to realise the transitoriness of life and all its ways. Nothing would be less useful than to fill the mind with gloomy images of death, and to torment the present by apprehensions as to the future. Religion does not require nor countenance any such morbid anxiety; yet it is good also to sober the thoughts with the consciousness of life's frailty and death's certainty. It is good above all to live every day as we would wish to have done when we come to die. We need not keep the dread event before us, but we should do our work and duty as if we were ever waiting for it

* Bede, ii. 13.

and ready to encounter it. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest."

Our work here should always be preparatory for the end. Our enjoyments should be such as shall not shame us when we stand face to face with death. The young, and the old too, but especially the young, are apt to forget this. In youth we fail to realise the intimate dependency, the moral coherency which binds life together everywhere, and gives an awful meaning to every part of it. We do not think of consequences as we recklessly yield to passion, or stain the soul by sinful indulgence. But the storm of passion never fails to leave its waste, and the stain, although it may have been washed by the tears of penitence, and the blood of a Saviour, remains. There is something different, something less firm, less clear, honest, or consistent in our life in consequence; and the buried sin rises from its grave in our sad moments, and haunts us with its terror, or abashes us with its shame. Assuredly it will find us out at last, if we lose not all spiritual sensibility. When our feet begin "to stumble on the dark mountains," and the present loses its hold upon us, and the objects of sense wax faint and dim, there is often a strangely vivid light shed over our whole moral history. Our life rises before us in its complete develop-

ment, and with the scars and wounds of sin just where we made them. The sorrow of an irreparable past comes upon us, and we are tortured in vain by the thought of the good we have thrown away, or of the evil we have made our portion.

Let no young man imagine for a moment that it can ever be unimportant whether he yields to this or that sinful passion, or, as it may appear to him at the time, venial indulgence. Let him not try to quiet his conscience by the thought that at the worst he will outlive the memory of his folly, and attain to a higher life in the future. Many may seem to him to have done this. Many of the greatest men have been, he may think, wild in youth. They have "sown their wild oats," as the saying is, and had done with them; and their future lives have only appeared the more remarkable in the view of the follies of their youth. A more mischievous delusion could not possibly possess the mind of any young man. For as surely as the innermost law of the world is the law of moral retribution, they who sow wild oats will reap, in some shape or another, a sour and bitter harvest. For "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap: he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

There is nothing more sure than this law of moral connexion and retribution. Life, through all its course, is a series of moral impulses and consequences, each part of which bears the impress of all that goes before, and again communicates its impress to all that follows. And it is with the character which is the sum of all that we meet death, and enter on the life to come. Every act of life—all our work, and study, and enjoyment—our temptations, our sins, our repentance, our faith, our virtue are preparing us—whether we think it or not—for happiness or misery hereafter. It is this more than anything that gives such a solemn character to the occupations of life. They are the lessons for a higher life. They are an education—a discipline for hereafter. This is their highest meaning.

Let young men remember the essential bearing of the present upon the future. In beginning life let them remember the end of it, and how it will be at the end as it has been throughout. All will be summed up to this point; and the future and the eternal will take their character from the present and the temporary. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." The threads of our moral history run

on in unbroken continuity. The shadow of death may cover them from the sight; but they emerge in the world beyond in like order as they were here.

Make your present life therefore a preparation for death and the life to come. Make it such by embracing now the light and love of God your Father—by doing the work of Christ your Saviour and Master—by using the world without abusing it—by seeking in all your duties, studies, and enjoyments, to become "meet for a "better country, that is, an heavenly." To the youngest among you the time may be short. The summons to depart may come in "a day and an hour when you think not." Happy then the young man whose Lord shall find him waiting—working—looking even from the portals of an opening life here to the gates of that celestial inheritance "incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away!"

THE END.

Printed by Ballantyne & Company, Edinburgh.